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STARS AND STRIPES



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THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2020

50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

VIRUS OUTBREAK

White House, Senate reach deal on \$2T rescue bill

BY ANDREW TAYLOR,
LISA MASCARO
AND JONATHAN LEMIRE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House and Senate leaders of both major political parties announced agreement early Wednesday on an unprecedented \$2 trillion emergency bill to rush sweeping aid to businesses, workers and a health care system slammed by the coronavirus pandemic.

The urgently needed pandemic response measure is the largest economic rescue measure in history and is intended as a week-long or monthlong patch for an economy spiraling into recession and a nation facing a potentially ghastly toll.

"To the American people, we say, big help, quick help is on the way," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Wednesday morning on CNN.

Schumer said he expected approval by the Republican-led Senate later in the day. That would leave final congressional approval up to the Democratic-controlled House, where the timetable for votes is unclear and whose members are mostly scattered around the country.

Top White House aide Eric Ueland announced the agreement in a Capitol hallway shortly after midnight, capping days of often intense haggling and mounting pressure.

SEE DEAL ON PAGE 5



The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford conducts high-speed turns in the Atlantic Ocean in October.

CONNOR LOESSIN / U.S. Navy

Flush with problems

Report: Navy's newest aircraft carriers have clogged toilets that cost \$400K to fix

BY BROCK VERGAKIS
The Virginian-Pilot

The Navy's two newest aircraft carriers have a problem with their toilets getting clogged and it costs \$400,000 to fix each time there's an issue with their sewage systems, according to a Congressional watchdog report released Tuesday.

The Norfolk-based USS Gerald R. Ford and USS George H.W. Bush were both built with a new toilet and sewage system that's similar to what is used on commercial aircraft, but increased in scale to accommo-

date more than 4,000 people, the report said.

But there's been unexpected and frequent clogging of the system, causing the Navy to determine it needs to acid flush each aircraft carrier's sewage system "on a regular basis."

"According to fleet maintenance officials, while each acid flush costs about \$400,000, the Navy has yet to determine how often and for how many ships this action will need to be repeated, making the full cost impact difficult to quantify," the report said.

SEE TOILETS ON PAGE 3

■ Marine Corps recruiters voice safety concerns as offices stay open
Page 6

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Many flights nearly empty as virus cuts travel

By DAVID KOENIG
Associated Press

Airline service in the United States is teetering on the brink of collapse, with near-empty planes and coronavirus outbreaks that have left some air traffic control towers empty.

Even with sharply reduced schedules, airlines are consolidating some of the remaining flights because passengers aren't showing up.

An official of one major U.S. air-

line, who asked that they and their airline not be identified, ticked off more than a dozen flights that departed Tuesday morning with fewer than 10 passengers on board.

The official said the average flight was just over 20% full and that figure is expected to drop into the teens by the weekend.

Major airlines are drafting plans in case they must shut down domestic flights because of a lack of air traffic controllers or airport screeners.

The Wall Street Journal reported that government agencies were considering ordering a shutdown of virtually all passenger flights within the U.S. The newspaper said, however, that President Donald Trump and his advisers are reluctant to order a shutdown partly because passenger planes also carry U.S. mail and vital cargo.

The FAA, which provides air traffic control across the country, declined to comment on whether the agency was considering ordering a shutdown.

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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RELOCATION GUIDE

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EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (March 26)	\$1.06
Dollar buys (March 26)	€0.900
British pound (March 26)	¥115.16
Japanese yen (March 26)	₩109.00
South Korean won (March 26)	1.197.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3783
British pound	1.1770
Canada (Dollar)	2.1228
China (Yuan)	0.1208
Denmark (Krone)	6.9153
Egypt (Pound)	0.9895
Finland (Euro)	1.0620/1.0700
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7534
Iceland (Króna)	3.0668
Israel (Shekel)	3.6344
Japan (Yen)	111.61
Kuwait (Dinar)	3.1351
Lithuania (Litas)	10.56
Malta (Euro)	5.11
Morocco (Dirham)	1.24
Qatar (Riyal)	3.7550
Singapore (Dollar)	1.4482
South Korea (Won)	1.229.31
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9811

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	1.09
3-month bill	0.09
30-year bond	1.37

WAR/MILITARY

US condemns attack on Sikh temple in Kabul

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — At least 25 people were killed when a lone gunman attacked a Sikh temple in Kabul's old town Wednesday morning, starting an hours-long firefights with Afghan special forces, local officials said.

Women and children were among those who died in the attack, the Interior Ministry said, adding that all of the victims were members of Afghanistan's small Sikh minority, which numbers in the thousands.

The gunman was killed in a gunfight with the special forces that lasted until late afternoon, Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul condemned the "fanatics and criminals who target a house of worship to harm innocents" and expressed condolences.

"Peace will only come when people resolve their differences through words, not guns," the embassy said on Twitter.

Afghan forces helped worshippers who were inside the temple when the attack began at 8 a.m. to escape, the Interior Ministry said. Several people who were wounded in the attack are being treated in hospitals.

Foreign troops from NATO's U.S.-led mission in Afghanistan provided advice and assistance to the Afghan soldiers who led the operation, a Resolute Support spokesman said.

The Taliban were quick to deny involvement in the assault. The SITE Intelligence Group, which tracks global terrorist activity, said the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan has claimed responsibility.

The deadly attack came less than a month after the U.S. signed a deal with the Taliban, aimed at ending America's longest war and allowing U.S. troops to fully withdraw from the country by next year if the Taliban and Afghan government adhere to conditions spelled out in the pact — including that the Taliban not allow attacks to be launched against the U.S. and its allies.

Bagram Airfield, the largest U.S. base in Afghanistan, has been attacked three times since the U.S.-Taliban deal was signed.

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PHOTOS BY RAHMAT GUL/AP



Above: Afghan families leave the site of an attack in Kabul, Afghanistan, Wednesday. A gunman stormed a religious gathering of Afghanistan's minority Sikhs in their place of worship in the heart of the Afghan capital's old city, a minority Sikh parliamentarian said.

Left: Family members cry after the attack, which left at least 25 dead and others wounded, including women and children. A lone gunman was killed in a gunfight with special forces that lasted until late afternoon, Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said.

Panel: Woman should be draft-eligible

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A congressionally mandated commission recommended Wednesday that women should be eligible for the draft and required to sign up at 18.

Congress created the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service in 2017 to develop recommendations about the need for a military draft and how to foster an interest in all types of national service among young Americans. In their final report, which was shared with the Pentagon, White House and Congress this week, commissioners recommend extending selective service registration to women.

"Women are as likely as men to be qualified for military service," said Debra Wada, vice chair of the commission and the former assistant secretary of the Army. "Ensuring they are part of the registration pool will only make sure we're more prepared. It signals that all Americans may be expected to serve in a national emergency."

Conscription into the military hasn't been used in more than 45 years, but men are still required by law to sign up for selective service at 18. The commission proposed Congress introduce legislation to amend the Military Selective Service Act to eliminate

male-only registration. The change would expand eligibility to all Americans ages 18 to 26.

Over nearly three years, commissioners held meetings and hearings, spoke to people in 42 cities, consulted more than 530 organizations and collected 4,300 public comments. The topic of extending the draft to women "evoked a range of passionate and heartfelt views," the commissioners wrote.

In the end, they decided the male-only military draft excludes women from a fundamental civic obligation, reinforces gender stereotypes about women's roles and omits a skilled population from being called into military service during emergencies.

The commission found that 29% of men and slightly more women, at 29.3%, are qualified to meet the initial physical and educational standards to serve in the U.S. military, Wada said.

"Ultimately it comes down to making sure that at a time of critical need, we have access to highly qualified individuals," she said.

More than 224,000 women serve in the U.S. military. Former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter ordered the opening of all combat roles to women five years ago, and at least 30 women have successfully completed Army Ranger School, according to the report.

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Toilets: Maintenance woes have led to wasteful spending

FROM FRONT PAGE

Both ships were built at Newport News Shipbuilding, which also recently christened the future aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy. Shelby Oakley, a director in GAO's Contracting and National Security Acquisitions team, said the Kennedy has the same system.

"The issue is not with water pressure because the system is a pressurized vacuum system. The issue, essentially, is that the pipes are too narrow and when there are a bunch of sailors flushing the toilet at the same time, like in the morning, the vacuum pressure doesn't work as effectively," Oakley wrote in an email to The Virginian-Pilot. "Waste builds up because it isn't sucked down and then you need the acid wash."

The cost issues with the clogged

toilets were included in a report that focused on how the Navy could save by paying attention to maintenance concerns when designing and building ships.

The GAO found 150 examples of systemic maintenance problems throughout the fleet for all classes of ships, resulting in at least \$130 billion more in maintenance than the Navy planned.

The report was requested by the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"As we state in our report, the quantity and breadth of the 150 problems we found — resulting in billions of dollars in unexpected costs, maintenance delays, and unreliable ships — suggest that existing policies and guidance have not ensured that new ships are reliable and can be sustained as planned," the report said.

PACIFIC

US military furloughs S. Korean workers

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. military will put nearly half of its South Korean workforce on unpaid leave starting next week after the two countries failed to reach a new defense cost-sharing deal, the local union said Wednesday as final furlough notices went out.

The allies met in Los Angeles earlier this month but remained deadlocked over U.S. demands for a sharp increase in South Korea's contribution to offset the costs of stationing some 28,500 American troops on the divided peninsula.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said plans for future meetings were on hold because of restricted travel due to the coro-

navirus pandemic, but negotiators would continue talks via phone calls and video conference calls.

The South has helped support U.S. troops under the so-called Special Measure Agreement since 1991, with most of the funds used for more than 9,000 South Korean employees, logistical support and construction projects.

The previous contract expired at the end of 2019, but the United States had been paying the salaries with programmed funds that will run out at the end of this month.

U.S. Forces Korea said it has completed its analysis to determine which local employees can be retained with additional Pentagon funds for critical operations related to "life, health, safety and readiness services."

"USFK began issuing furlough notification letters to (Korean National) employees who are subject to the furlough today. Unfortunately, due to the continued absence of an agreed upon SMA, USFK will be furloughing a portion of our KN employees next week," the public affairs office said in a statement.

It didn't provide numbers, but a representative of the USFK Korean Employees' Union Son Gyo and another union official said about 4,000 members had received furlough notices.

The issue doesn't affect non-appropriated fund organizations such as on-base restaurants and exchange stores.

Military officials also have said the hospital on Camp Humphreys, other medical facilities, law enforcement, schools, com-

missaries and post office services will see little to no effect thanks to mitigating measures.

The union called for the rules to be re-vised as part of the negotiations to better guarantee their labor rights.

"The South Korean government should no longer allow the situation that laborers are held hostage whenever the South Korean-U.S. SMA negotiations are held," it said during a news conference in Seoul.

USFK officials have said the furloughed employees won't receive back pay and won't be allowed to work on a volunteer basis.

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Asian Bazaar scholarship fundraiser to be held online

By THERON GODBOLD
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The Yokota Spouses' Club will not allow the global coronavirus pandemic to stifle a 40-year tradition.

The club's annual Asian Bazaar, which raises money for scholarships and other causes, has moved online as a virtual marketplace, the club president said this week. Normally the fundraiser is held in a hangar on base or at the Taiyo Community Center, allowing buyers to peruse the merchandise.

"We really wanted to do the bazaar in person, but with corona, we knew we had to try a different avenue," club president Erin Laskey said by phone on Tuesday. "Instead of postponing we put our thinking caps on and figured a way to continue with the bazaar and ran with it."

Items for sale are posted on the spouses' club bazaar website, where eligible buyers with Defense Department ID cards — including service members, Defense Department civilian workers and their families — may make a purchase, Laskey said.

Furniture, home décor and other items with Asian themes are available from vendors throughout Japan. The online bazaar concludes April 12.

A percentage of the profits from the sold merchandise goes toward the club's philanthropies, such as a scholarship fund



Home decor items and furniture pieces can be found on the Yokota Spouses Club bazaar website and all proceeds go to their philanthropies.

designed to help dependents and spouses further their education. In the past three years the Yokota Spouses' Club has given away \$84,500 in scholarships; last year alone the club doled out 13 scholarships of \$2,500 each, Laskey said.

Laskey said interested buyers from area bases — Camp Zama, Yokosuka Naval

Base, Naval Air Facility Atsugi and Camp Fuji — are also welcome to shop the bazaar website. The club created a website for the bazaar apart from the club website.

"Any local area bases can shop online, set a pickup time, show their ID and pick up their items," she said. "There is a delivery option online but there is an added fee

for the delivery."

For more information about the Yokota Spouses' Club scholarships, visit www.yokotaspousesclub.com/scholarships.html.

To see what the bazaar has to offer, go to www.ysbazaar.com.

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American soldier found dead in South Korea is 2nd in 2 days

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — A combat medic died in his barracks over the weekend at Camp Humphreys, the military said Wednesday, adding the cause of death was under investigation.

Spc. Clay Welch, 20, of Dearborn Heights, Mich., was found unresponsive on Sunday and pronounced dead at the scene, the 2nd Infantry Divi-

sion said. His death was not related to the coronavirus outbreak in South Korea, it added.

Welch was assigned to the Fort Riley, Kan.-based 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, which began a nine-month rotation in South Korea last month.

He joined the Army from Detroit in September 2017 and joined the brigade combat team in April 2018 after finishing training at Fort Sill, Okla., according to a press release.

"Clay's death affects every member in our formation. We are all deeply saddened by the loss," said battalion commander Lt. Col. James Armstrong.

Welch was the second soldier to die over the weekend at Camp Humphreys, the main U.S. base in South Korea.

Pfc. Marissa Jo Gloria, 25, a combat engineer with the 2nd ID sustainment brigade, was found dead in her barracks on Saturday.

The 2nd ID said investigations were ongoing in both cases, but it took the unusual step of ruling out the coronavirus because neither soldier had symptoms.

The Army has imposed strict measures to prevent the highly contagious virus from spreading on base. Access is restricted and service members have been barred from nonessential travel or most off-post social activities.



Welch

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Deal: Senate expected to pass historic economic recovery package

FROM FRONT PAGE

Some final pieces of the agreement need to be finalized in detailed legislative language.

The Senate was likely to pass the measure Wednesday afternoon. In the House, both Democratic and Republican leaders hope to clear the measure for President Donald Trump's signature by a voice vote without having to call lawmakers back to Washington, but that may prove challenging, as the bill is sure to be opposed by some conservatives upset at its cost and scope. Ardent liberals were restless as well.

The rescue package would give direct payments to most Americans, expand unemployment benefits and provide a \$367 billion program for small businesses to keep making payroll while workers are forced to stay home.

One of the last issues concerned \$500 billion for guaranteed, subsidized loans to larger industries, including a fight over how much to give airlines. Hospitals would get significant help as well.

"After days of intense discussions, the Senate has reached a bipartisan agreement on a historic relief package for this pandemic," said Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., a key negotiator. "It will rush new resources onto the front lines of our nation's health care fight. And it

will inject trillions of dollars of cash into the economy as fast as possible to help Americans work, families, small businesses and industries make it through this disruption and emerge on the other side ready to soar."

At the White House on Tuesday, even as the crisis deepened, President Donald Trump urged people back to work in the coming weeks and held out a prospect, based more on hope than science, that the country could return to normal in under a month.

"We have to go back to work, much sooner than people thought," Trump told a Fox News town hall. He said he'd like to have the country "opened up and just raring to go" by Easter, April 12. But in a White House briefing later, Trump said that "our decision will be based on hard facts and data."

Medical professionals have said that social distancing needs to be stepped up, not relaxed, to slow the spread of infections. At the White House briefing, the public health authorities said that it was particularly important for people in the hard-hit New York City metropolitan area to quarantine themselves for 14 days and for those who have recently left the city to do the same.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the gov-

ernment's top infectious disease expert, said pointedly at the briefing, "No one is going to want to tone down anything when you see what is going on in a place like New York City."

On Capitol Hill, five days of arduous talks produced the bill, creating tensions among Congress' top leaders, who each took care to tenu to party politics as they maneuvered and battled over crafting the legislation. But failure was never an option, which permitted both sides to mark big wins.

Even before the deal was reached, news of the likely but elusive agreement sent the stock market rocketing Tuesday. The rescue package would be larger than the 2008 bank bailout and 2009 recovery act combined.

The package would give one-time payments to Americans — \$1,200 per adult making up to \$75,000 a year, and \$2,400 to married couples making up to \$150,000, with \$500 payments per child.

A huge cash infusion for hospitals expecting a flood of COVID-19 patients grew during the talks at the insistence of Sen. Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader, while Republicans pressed for tens of billions of dollars for additional relief to be delivered through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the lead

federal disaster agency.

Democrats said the package would help replace the salaries of furloughed workers for four months, rather than the three months first proposed. Those workers would get the amount a state provides for unemployment, plus a \$600 per week add-on, with gig workers like Uber drivers covered for the first time.

"It ensures that all workers are protected whether they work for businesses small, medium or large, along with self-employed and workers in the gig economy," Schumer said.

Schumer also announced that businesses controlled by members of Congress and top administration officials — including Trump and his immediate family members — would be ineligible for assistance from receiving loans or investments from new Treasury programs. The New York Democrat immediately sent out a roster of negotiating wins for transit systems, hospitals and cash-hungry state governments that were cemented after Democrats blocked the measure in votes held Sunday and Monday to maneuver for such gains.

Republicans won inclusion of an "employee retention" tax credit that's estimated to provide \$50 billion to companies that retain employees on payroll and

cover 50% of workers' paychecks. Companies would also be able to defer payment of the 6.2% Social Security payroll tax.

In recent days, Trump has sounded a note of frustration about the unprecedented modern-day effort to halt the virus' march by essentially shutting down public activities in ways that now threaten the U.S. economy.

Even though Trump's administration recommended Americans to curtail activities for 15 days, starting just over a week ago, the Republican president said that he may soon allow parts of the economy, in regions less badly hit by the virus, to begin reopening.

He continued on that theme Tuesday as he weighed a relaxation of social distancing guidelines after the 15-day period is up. His suggestion that the pandemic could ease and allow a return to normalcy in a mere few weeks is not supported by public health officials or many others in government.

On Tuesday, top defense and military leaders warned department personnel that the virus problems could extend for eight to 10 weeks or longer. Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a Defense Department town hall meeting that the crisis could even extend into July.

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Sommer Education, Traditional Japanese Entertainment
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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Health threat level raised at Army bases globally

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The Army has placed crisis response forces under the highest "Delta" health threat level, requiring them to stay in their homes to protect their health as the coronavirus continues to spread rapidly around the world, the service announced.

The health threat level was also raised at Army bases around the world to the second highest level — "Charlie" — meaning only essential personnel will be granted access, the Army said Tuesday.

Tougher measures were put in place for crisis response units, who may be ordered on short notice for a global contingency, it said. The Army maintains forces, such as elements within the 82nd Airborne and the 173rd Airborne, which is based in Vicenza, Italy, that are ready to deploy worldwide within 18 hours. More than 6,800 people in Italy have died of the lung disease caused by the coronavirus, giving the country the highest death toll of any country, including China, where the virus originated.

"To further protect our contingency response forces from exposure to the COVID-19 virus, we are taking extra precautions and placing them under an HPCON Delta status," said Gen. James C. McConville, Chief of Staff of the Army. "We are committed to maintaining the Army's fighting strength by reducing the spread of this virus while simultaneously maintaining dynamic force employment capabilities."

Health Protection Condition Delta is the highest military threat level. In this case, it means soldiers are expected to remain at home for extended periods of time and movement in the community may be restricted, the Army said.

Under HPCON Charlie, access will be restricted to Army installations in the U.S. and overseas.

"Installations will limit all access to essential personnel only and will limit the numbers of access points. All unit personnel are expected to follow all social distancing guidance to continue protecting



JOY DULEN/U.S. Army

U.S. Army Reserve Sgt. Andre Lewis with the 7th Mission Support Command, questions a driver in Kaiserslautern, Germany, on March 19. The virus has led the Army to raise the health threat level at bases around the world.

our force," the Army said.

As of Tuesday, there were at least 321 coronavirus cases within the global U.S. military community, compared to 59 on March 17, Pentagon data show. A little more than half of the cases — 174 — are in troops, with the rest in family members, Defense Department civilians and contractors.

Cases overseas have also increased, particularly in Europe, which the World Health Organization has said is the epicenter of the global pandemic. Seventy-two members of the military community overseen by U.S. European Command were infected with the virus as of Wednesday, EUCOM said.

Most of the cases in Europe are in Stuttgart, where EUCOM has its headquarters. As of Wednesday morning, Army officials in Stuttgart reported 44 coronavirus cases, up from 33 a day earlier. In addition, 441 members of the military community in Stuttgart are in self-isolation or self-quarantine, the command said.

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Army deploys 3 field hospitals to 2 states hit hardest by outbreak

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy on Tuesday ordered three field hospital units to two states hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, which has sickened more than 55,000 people in the United States.

The deployment will send soldiers and "full hospital capabilities" from the Fort Campbell, Ky., 531st Hospital Center; the Fort Carson, Colo., 627th Hospital Center, and the Fort Hood, Texas, 9th Hospital Center to Washington state and New York. The units provide deployable medical capabilities, which are typically outfitting to care for combat wounded service members, but top defense officials have said in recent days that they could be used to unbend local hospitals of trauma and other patients to focus their care on coronavirus cases.

"Army health care professionals are adequately equipped with first-rate training, equipment and technology in order to deal with emergent health issues," McCarthy

‘Protecting the health of the force and the American people are our top priorities.’

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy

said in a statement. "Protecting the health of the force and the American people are our top priorities."

All of the deploying field hospitals provide intensive-care-unit beds, intermediate-care beds, operating rooms, emergency departments, X-ray facilities and pharmacies, according to the Army. The units include about 300 soldiers each, service officials said.

Those deploying soldiers are all active-duty, according to the Army. Pentagon officials have been reluctant to activate Reserve and National Guard medical units on a large scale, as they worry that could take medical professionals away from their civilian jobs, where they are likely already responding to the pandemic.

The deploying units could ar-

rive in New York and Washington within about seven days, the Army said.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Monday said he expected to send Army field hospitals first to Seattle and New York City. Additional hospital units could be deployed in the near future, he added.

Health officials in New York reported 25,665 confirmed cases of the coronavirus in that state as of Tuesday afternoon, including 14,909 in New York City. More than 190 people had died of the disease by Tuesday, they said. In Washington state, 2,469 people had tested positive for coronavirus and 123 had died, state health officials said Tuesday evening.

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ZACHARY T. BEATTY/U.S. Marine Corps

Maj. Gen. James W. Bierman, commander of Marine Corps Recruiting Command, speaks to Marine officer recruiters in San Diego in 2019. Recruiters are voicing safety concerns over offices remaining open amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Marine recruiters voice safety concerns as offices stay open

By IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps is leaving recruiting offices open and conducting in-person interviews with potential Marines, even as Army efforts move online and recruiters voice safety concerns tied to the coronavirus pandemic.

A Marine Corps Recruiting Command memo March 17 called for recruiters to "strike the difficult balance between mission and the protection of our team and families," adding that travel is limited to mission-essential requirements.

"Where we can't stay physically connected to our target market, we'll stay connected through virtual means," the memo said.

However, recruiters who spoke with Stars and Stripes said the threat posed by COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, isn't being taken seriously enough.

"Recruiters are still expected to do interviews in their office and drive kids to (Military Entrance Processing Station) where they may not be able to practice preventive measures for COVID-19," a Marine recruiter in Michigan said on condition of anonymity, because he was not authorized to speak.

In Michigan, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer issued a statewide stay-at-home order for three weeks that began Monday. However, Navy and Marine personnel are exempt from that order when conducting official business, a Naval Criminal Investigative Service memo stated Monday.

The threat posed by the virus led the Army to shutter all of its recruiting offices and rely more on social media. The Navy has said it will continue in-person recruiting, though they have closed their doors locally, the Michigan recruiter said.

The Marine Corps Recruiting Command did not specify how many of its offices remain open, following a Stars and Stripes query.

"The Marine Corps Recruiting Command remains steadfast in its mission to find quality men and women to serve as Marines, and during this national emergency, directed specific steps be taken by recruiting personnel as they interact with prospective applicants," command spokesman Gunnery Sgt. Justin Kronenberg said in a statement.

Large portions of the country have been directed to stay home, which "has a dramatic effect" on recruiting and limits "important in-person conversations" that help determine an applicant's future, he said.

Recruiters are taking preventive measures to protect themselves and screening applicants heading to recruit training, Kronenberg said.

In Louisville, Ky., a March 16 memo from the recruiting office there begins with a motivational quote from Chesty Puller, a Marine Corps legend. It then says that "the environment is changing rapidly but one thing [that] is not changing is our mission and we will make our mission."

Making mission normally requires working 16 or 17 hours a day, five to six days a week, said a Marine recruiter at the Louisville station. Sometimes even that's not enough.

"I received a mission increase once because my peers could not make their mission," said the recruiter, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

But the Louisville-Jefferson County area had at least 35 confirmed cases and one related death as of Tuesday, the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center website said.

In light of the situation, the local recruiter said business as usual should not continue.

"The people [MRC] is putting at risk are not just recruiters, it's their families with health problems too," the Louisville recruiter said.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Navy curbs movement for some sailors

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
AND SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — U.S. Navy installations in Japan moved Wednesday to restrict movements and activities in response to a state of heightened risk for the coronavirus declared by the far-reaching Indo-Pacific Command.

INDOPACOM increased its health-risk status to the Defense Department's second-highest level as the pandemic worsens across the globe. INDOPACOM is at Health Protection Level Charlie, which indicates a substantial risk of the coronavirus, according to a message on the command's website Wednesday.

Level C indicates that a disease is spreading at a high rate and calls for measures such as limiting movement and meetings, maintaining social distance, self-isolating to avoid spreading or contracting the disease and even more stringent measures, if needed, according to information from Pacific Air Forces. The highest risk level, Delta, signals a severe risk and widespread community transmission.

The same day, Naval Forces Japan issued a memorandum to sailors tightening down on liberty and travel for its service members. Those living off base may travel only between the base and their homes, according to the memo. Sailors' family members are encouraged, but not required, to comply with the restrictions.

"All off-base restaurants, bars, cafes, night clubs and like establishments, indoor fitness facilities, onsen and public baths are off-limits," Naval Forces Japan commander Rear Adm. B. P. Fort wrote in the memo.

The restrictions apply only to Navy personnel, but "government civilian employees and contractors and their dependents are strongly encouraged to meet the intent of this order," Naval Forces Japan spokesman Lt. Cmdr. David Levy told Stars and Stripes in an email Wednesday.

"These measures, consistent with those taken in communities in the United States, are part of our commitment to protecting our people, our readiness and our alliance," Levy said.

Individual commanders have discretion to impose restrictions that mitigate the risks of sustained community transmission of the virus, INDOPACOM's message said.

At Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, commander Capt. Brad Stallings has imposed the naval forces restrictions on travel and liberty, according to a post on the base official Facebook page.

Service members and their families living off-base are permitted to travel only between work and home, other than on official business such as to off-base doctors, veterinarians, post offices or for essential items such as gas, groceries and household items.

"When making an official or



JASMINE IKUSER/U.S. Navy

Malik Cooper, a recreation assistant for the fitness center at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, cleans equipment Wednesday.

These measures, consistent with those taken in communities in the United States, are part of our commitment to protecting our people, our readiness and our alliance. — Lt. Cmdr. David Levy, Naval Forces Japan spokesman

essential stop off-base, all are reminded to minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19 by practicing social distancing and minimizing exposure duration," Stallings wrote on the base Facebook page.

U.S. Army installations on the main islands of Japan on Wednesday had already suspended non-essential visitor passes. U.S. Army Garrison Japan spokesman Timothy Flack said that the suspension would remain in effect until at least April 8.

"At that time, officials will re-evaluate to determine if a continuing suspension is still necessary," he said, adding that the move was made ahead of the upgraded Health Protection Condition to minimize potential health risks.

Yokota Air Base, home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo, imposed no new restrictions Wednesday.

"The base is now in (Level C) but has been preparing for the change with the measures we have already put in place," 374th Airlift Wing spokeswoman Capt. Alicia Premo said in an email.

Likewise, Phil Motter, a spokesman for U.S. Army Garrison Okinawa, said that no changes have been made to base entry procedures there.

"We haven't implemented any changes, but this is a fluid situation and changes may be made at any time," he said.

Commanders may order only mission-essential personnel to report to work, according to INDOPACOM. In that case, service members should contact their chain of command to determine status and work requirements.

Some installations may impose further movement and travel restrictions in addition to those already imposed by DOD, and the movement of people potentially exposed to the virus may also be further restricted, the command said.

"Mission-essential travel means remaining at home except to leave for work in critical jobs as prescribed by unit chains of command; to buy groceries or other important goods; to receive or provide health care; to drop off or pick up children from care; and to get fresh air while observing 6-foot social distancing between non-family members," the message said.

Strict hygiene procedures should be enforced, along with home quarantine or isolation procedures as required, the message states.

"Continue to wash your hands,

use hand sanitizer, cough into your sleeve, no hand shaking, and practice personal distancing (two arm's length)," according to INDOPACOM. "Do not come to work if sick. Consider the limitation or cancellation of meetings, training events, etc.; as well as implementing telework and staggered shift options at supervisors' discretion."

Such actions can dramatically decrease the risk of infection and slow the spread of the virus, the message stated.

Levy said that despite the Navy reporting no positive cases of coronavirus among its personnel in Japan, "there is no time for complacency; we must remain vigilant to prevent this disease from spreading among our force."

Hawaii, where INDOPACOM is headquartered, has experienced a significant increase in coronavirus cases, the message said. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website reported 66 cases there as of Wednesday. On Monday, Gov. David Ige issued a stay-at-home order effective through April 30.

Additionally, the CDC has issued a level 3 travel advisory for many countries in the INDOPACOM area of operations, meaning that Americans should avoid nonessential travel to those destinations. As of Wednesday, level 3 countries include Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

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AKIFUMI ISHIKAWA/Stars and Stripes

Commuters check out the Summer Olympics countdown clock Wednesday outside Tokyo Station.

Olympic countdown clocks in Tokyo stop

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Many commuters couldn't help but gawk Wednesday at special clocks erected around the city that had been counting down to the start of the Summer Olympics.

Instead of showing how many days were left until the much-anticipated games, the displays read "25-3," or March 25, the current date.

The change was made a day after the International Olympic Committee announced that the event would be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, a spokesman from the Tokyo Organizing Committee for the Olympics and Paralympics told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday.

The games, which will now kick off at a yet-to-be-determined date next year, will still be called the 2020 Olympics, said the IOC, a symbolic gesture that it hopes will allow the event to "stand as a beacon of hope."



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VIRUS OUTBREAK

3 sailors first to test positive on deployed ship

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Three sailors aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt in the Philippines Sea were flown off the ship Tuesday after testing positive for the coronavirus, acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly announced.

"These are our first three cases of [coronavirus] on a ship that's deployed," Modly told reporters at the Pentagon during a briefing on the Navy's efforts to help combat the virus.

The sailors were flown to a military hospital in the Pacific region, according to Adm. Michael Gilday, chief of naval operations. He said he did not know how many people are in isolation aboard the ship after

being in contact with the sailors.

The aircraft carrier has about 5,000 people aboard, Gilday said.

The Roosevelt was last in port 15 days ago in Saigon in southern Vietnam. It was the second time that an American aircraft carrier has made a port call to the country since the fall of Saigon in 1975 at the end of the Vietnam War.

Since Feb. 28, ships in the Pacific region under the command of 7th Fleet have been directed to spend at least 14 days at sea between port visits due to the virus outbreak in nearby countries.

Gilday would not directly connect the cases to the Saigon port call, saying the Roosevelt has aircraft flying to and from the ship, making it difficult to determine where the infections originated. At the

time of the Roosevelt's visit in early March, there were only 16 cases of the virus in Vietnam, which were in the northern city of Hanoi, Gilday said. The decision for allowing the visit was made by Adm. Phil Richardson, the commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, he said.

Gilday said he believed most port visits now in the Pacific are just for maintenance or supplies, and only in rare cases would a sailor need to be away from the pier to pick up equipment.

The Navy is following the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines to test only when a person has symptoms associated with coronavirus. The ship has the capability to test sailors, however it must still send samples to a Defense Department laboratory to be pro-

cessed, said Rear Adm. Bruce Gillingham, the Navy's surgeon general.

The Navy is examining what happened on the Roosevelt to determine whether there needs to be changes to procedures for ships at sea, Gilday said.

"Whenever we have a positive [test] on any ship with any unit ... we're doing the forensics on each one of those cases to try and understand what kind of best practices, or the do's and the don'ts that we can quickly promulgate fleet-wide," he said.

As of Tuesday afternoon, the Navy had 86 active coronavirus cases, Modly said. Out of the total, 57 are service members, 13 are Navy civilian workers, 11 are dependents, and five are contractors.

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Guard adds 1K troops daily to fight virus

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

More than 9,000 National Guard members are now activated to fight the coronavirus pandemic, and their top general said Tuesday that troop increases will continue to grow by 1,000 daily for the next week.

"It's hard to predict what the complete and total response will be," Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel, chief of the National Guard Bureau, said during a news conference.

Every day, governors and adjutants general are looking to the National Guard as a resource to fill gaps, he said.

Guard members are working in some capacity in all 50 states, Washington and three U.S. territories to combat coronavirus, which has now infected more than 55,000 Americans, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center.

Other missions for the Guard vary among the states. They include response planners, response liaisons and support to state emergency operations centers,

support to health care professionals, logistics support, assisting with disinfecting and cleaning common public spaces, providing transportation for health care providers, collecting and delivering samples, and assisting with sample administration.

More than 900 Arizona National Guard members will deploy by the end of the week to communities where the greatest need for support has been identified, said David Nunn, spokesman for the Arizona National Guard. Those soldiers and airmen will work with grocery stores to unload trucks until the stores are able to get more staff hired.

"We are bridging the gap," he said.

More than 500 California National Guard troops are working in Amador, Monterey, Riverside, Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties at food bank warehouses, according to a news release from the state's Guard.

As troops come onto active-duty status, Lengyel said they undergo a process to ensure they are healthy and not potentially infected with the coronavirus. As



TONY DEJAK/AP

Members of The Ohio National Guard assist in repackaging emergency food boxes for food distribution at the Cleveland Food Bank in Cleveland, on Tuesday. Guard units are helping to transport medical supplies, distribute food and even help direct traffic at drive-through testing sites.

long as service members continue to feel healthy, there is no procedure in place to ensure when they return home, they are not bringing the virus with them.

"We are taking all the health protection measures," such as frequent hand washing and using protective equipment when necessary, Lengyel said.

So far, 26 members of the National Guard have reported testing positive for the virus. That is a mix of troops on and off active duty, he said.

The Guard is also taking into consideration that many of its members work in the medical field in their civilian jobs and they should remain in place whenever

possible. Though Lengyel said sometimes it is unavoidable, as he pulled one National Guard officer onto his staff that works as a civilian emergency room doctor in Missouri to help with decision-making.

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Fort Jackson Army recruit tests positive for coronavirus

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — An Army recruit at Fort Jackson, S.C., has tested positive for the coronavirus, marking the first known case of the illness in the military's initial entrance training programs, service officials said Tuesday.

The recruit was among two positive cases announced at Fort Jackson, where about 50% of future soldiers are trained, post officials said. The second soldier to test positive was participating in the Adjutant General Basic Officer Leader Course, officials said.

The soldiers who tested positive for the virus have been placed in isolation and are receiving medical attention, according to a Fort Jackson statement. They will not be allowed to return to their training programs until they are cleared by a doctor.

The Army in recent weeks has been screening recruits multiple times before they arrive at their initial entrance training location and conducting additional checks before they begin their training, top service officials said last week. The screenings include temperature checks and a series of questions designed to determine whether they had been at risk of exposure to the virus in the past 14 days.

Even after the positive test of the recruit this week, Army officials said they are confident in the steps that they have taken to date to screen for the virus. Additionally, the service has canceled family day visits and closed its graduation ceremonies to the public, including the family members of recruits.

"We continue to assess our protective measures and they are currently working extremely well," said Army Col. Rich Mc-

Norton, a spokesman for Army Training and Doctrine Command, which oversees the service's initial training at 17 installations across the U.S.

The recruit who tested positive was set to train with Fort Jackson's 3rd Battalion, 13th Infantry Regiment, but has been isolated from other recruits after answers to the coronavirus screening questions revealed the recruit could have been exposed, said Army Brig. Gen. Milford Beagle Jr., Fort Jackson's top commander. The recruit first showed symptoms related to the disease Friday before testing positive Monday, Beagle said in a video message posted to Fort Jackson's Facebook page.

Post officials are now working to determine who was in contact with the recruit and the other soldier at Fort Jackson since they arrived on post, he said. Locations that they were known to have visited are being

cleaned thoroughly.

"I am grateful for everyone's patience and empathy over the last month as we have been fighting the spread of COVID-19," Beagle said, referring to the formal name of the disease caused by the coronavirus. "We need to continue to work together and help each other as we navigate through this health emergency."

Top Army officials last week vowed to continue basic combat training and other initial-entry courses, which they said were vital to keeping the service running. Gen. James McConville, the Army chief of staff, told reporters Friday that only about half of the typical number of recruits were shipping to initial training.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

S. Korea: Trump asked for testing kits help

BY KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYOUNG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's president said President Donald Trump asked South Korea for help with coronavirus testing kits and other equipment, and officials offered to send what they could as the United States struggled to cope with the pandemic.

Moon Jae-in's comments came as the South reported a slight up-tick in the number of confirmed cases on Tuesday, raising the total to 9,137 but remaining far below the peak of 909 infections on Feb. 29.

Authorities blamed a large jump in imported cases, prompting them to impose a two-week quarantine on all visitors arriving from the U.S., in addition to that already imposed on Europeans.

Trump made the request during a 23-minute phone conversation to discuss cooperation against the virus, according to the White House.

"Yesterday, U.S. President Donald Trump made a request to us for the urgent provision of test kits and quarantine products," Moon said Wednesday during a visit to Seegene Inc., a Seoul-based company that develops diagnostic solutions.

The comment elaborated on a transcript of the phone conversation showing that Moon was willing to provide as much equipment as it could spare but noted possible limitations because of the U.S. need for approval by the Food and Drug Administration.

"When President Moon explained that FDA approval may be required, President Trump said he would take immediate action to ensure that approval is granted within the day," according to the transcript.

Jeong Eun-kyeong, director of the Korea Center for Disease Control, also said Wednesday that South Korea is willing to send

chemical reagents used to extract genetic material during the diagnostic tests, as long as it doesn't have a negative effect on its own testing capabilities.

The White House confirmed that the leaders spoke Tuesday but did not mention the request.

South Korea has drawn praise for its aggressive approach to testing and tracking the virus as it was at the center of one of the largest outbreaks outside of China for weeks. It pioneered the use of drive-thru clinics and employed a closed-circuit TV network to find and isolate other people who may have been exposed.

Trump has insisted that the U.S. is "doing a tremendous amount" to fight the virus despite criticism about shortages of testing capabilities and respirators used for treatment.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper also said Tuesday that the military is "making sure we have enough test kits."

"It's not perfect right now," he told reporters. "But for the most part, we've been able to — to test people and get results back in a timely manner."

U.S. Forces Korea, which commands some 28,500 service members, relied on South Korean tests for weeks before standing up its own capabilities on March 8. USFK has had 10 infections, including one soldier.

Moored credited the speedy development of diagnostic solutions by local biotech companies for helping South Korea to slow the pace of infections even as the U.S. and other countries see the number of cases spike.

South Korea said 126 people have died from the virus, while 3,730 have fully recovered and been discharged. The number of imported cases increased by 34 to 101 on Tuesday, marking the largest single-day rise.

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Marine Capt. Bryan McDonnell said in the statement.

Recruit training is continuing with no plans to suspend it as of Tuesday afternoon, McDonnell said. He said the base had taken steps to "harden our health protection posture against the impacts of COVID-19."

The announcement suspending leave follows a decision to close graduation ceremonies to the public and suspend family activities. Graduation events will be streamed live on Parris Island's Facebook page during the ceremony and the video will be available later on the Depot's website.

The policy will be reviewed again after May 11. Marines will be able to use the 10-day leave at a later time.

"While we understand this is challenging for new Marines and their families, this policy protects Marines, their families, Civilian Marines, and the community at-large from additional exposure,"



Blue House

South Korean President Moon Jae-in visits Seegene Inc., which is developing diagnostic solutions for fighting the coronavirus, Wednesday in Seoul.

USFK declares health emergency

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Gen. Robert Abrams, the top U.S. commander in South Korea, declared a public health emergency on Wednesday, a move that grants him more authority to enforce restrictions aimed at preventing the spread of coronavirus.

The decision came a day after U.S. Forces Korea reported its 10th coronavirus case in an American contractor who worked at the Eighth Army headquarters on Camp Humphreys. Only one soldier has tested positive.

"In order to ensure I possess the necessary authorities needed

to enforce compliance and protect the force, I have declared a Public Health Emergency for all U.S. commands and military installations" in South Korea, Abrams said in a video announcement.

He said the new designation applies to all service members, family members, U.S. and South Korean civilian employees, contractors and Defense Department retirees who have access to U.S. military installations.

Violations will be subject to punishment including barring individuals from installations, he added.

The overall number of confirmed infections in South Korea has been on a downward trend in

recent days, but health authorities have warned that the threat remains due to cluster outbreaks and imported cases.

The public health emergency will remain in effect through April 23 unless Abrams decides to change that, USFK said.

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Leave after boot camp halted for new Marines

BY STEPHEN FASTENAU
The (Hilton Head, S.C.) Island Packet

HILTON HEAD, S.C. — New Marines won't go home after boot camp at Parris Island as a coronavirus precaution.

The 10-day leave following graduation from Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., has been suspended through at least May 11, the base announced. Marines will instead report directly to their next stop to continue training.

"While we understand this is challenging for new Marines and their families, this policy protects Marines, their families, Civilian Marines, and the community at-large from additional exposure,"

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

First signs of virus disruption appear in housing

Associated Press

The outbreak of the coronavirus has dealt a shock to the global economy with unprecedented speed as it continues to spread across the world. Here is a look at some of the latest developments Wednesday related to the global economy, particular economic sectors, and the workplace:

Housing: Economists have been waiting for the first signs of virus-related disruptions in housing with the expectation that they will be seismic. Federal housing data looks further back for trends, meaning there is a lag in real world activity. But details have begun to emerge in private surveys.

On Wednesday, the Mortgage Bankers Association reported that mortgage applications plunged 29.4% last week. People trying to sell homes have cancelled showings during the outbreak and because closings are done in person, economists expect sales will decline sharply. But the virus has affected the market in other, unforeseen ways as well.

Despite additional cuts to benchmark interest rates by the U.S. Federal Reserve, mortgage rates have actually been rising.

Joel Kan, MBA's Associate Vice President of Economic and Industry Forecasting, said that's partially because lenders amid the outbreak are wrestling with capacity issues, backlogs in the pipeline, and the challenge of working remotely in real estate.

"Home purchase applications

were notably impacted by rising rates and the widespread economic disruption and uncertainty over household employment and incomes," Kan wrote. "Last week's purchase index fell 15% to its lowest level since August 2019."

While mortgage applications fall, refinancing, which can be done from home, is soaring. Lending Tree says the economic effects of the virus outbreak have led to unprecedented volatility in mortgage interest rates and an overwhelming surge of borrower demand. The company's data shows that refinance mortgage applications through its marketplace tripled from a year ago in each of the 50 largest cities and in all but five states. In San Francisco, refinance loan requests skyrocketed 417%.

Retail: Local groceries and other mom-and-pop shops have become a lifeline for millions of people ordered by states or cities to shelter at home. Major retailers are another, and the impact of the virus has reordered priorities.

Target has been aggressively remodeling and opening new stores as competition from Amazon.com grows increasingly intense. On Wednesday, it significantly rolled back those plans. Target said it will remodel 130 stores this year, less than half of 300 it had planned. It will open only 15 to 20 smaller format stores this year, down from the 36 it had hoped to. It will also push back plans to incorporate fresh food and alcohol in its online pickup service.



Construction on a building off the Hyman walking mall continues during the coronavirus outbreak in Aspen, Colo., on Tuesday. The Mortgage Bankers Association reported Wednesday that mortgage applications plunged last week.

The Minneapolis company warned Wednesday that it is absorbing rising costs, including higher pay for workers. Target expects an additional \$300 million in costs this quarter from a \$2 bump in hourly pay, and increased investments in online operations. The company withdrew its annual and quarterly financial guidance and suspended its share repurchase program to raise much-needed cash.

Fast food chains are offering another lifeline, but at a cost. The owner of Pizza Hut, KFC and Taco Bell said in a regulatory filing that 7,000 of its restaurants worldwide are closed, including over 1,000 Pizza Hut Express locations in the U.S. and over 900 KFCs in the U.K.

"In markets where governments have imposed restrictions on travel outside of the home or where customers are practicing social distancing, restaurant traffic has also been significantly impacted," Yum Brands said in its filing. It too is compiling cash.

"In markets where governments have imposed restrictions on travel outside of the home or where customers are practicing social distancing, restaurant traffic has also been significantly impacted," Yum Brands said in its filing. It too is compiling cash.

Yum increased borrowing under an existing credit facility to \$525 million from \$425 million. The company also suspended its \$2 billion stock buyback program.

Yum said because the situation is ongoing and the duration and severity are unclear, it's difficult to forecast results. It expects COVID-19 to impact its same-store sales for the quarter ended June 30 more significantly than in the current quarter due to the increasing number of markets currently impacted.

Markets: Stocks were seesawing in Wednesday trading after Congress and the White House reached a deal to inject nearly \$2 trillion of aid into an economy ravaged by the coronavirus.

Travel-related stocks are a bright spot, bouncing back from lows as investors bargain hunt. Shares of Norwegian Cruise Line and Royal Caribbean are up double digits, while hotel operators including InterContinental Hotels, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts

and Marriott International have single-digit gains.

Travel: The Associated Press reported this week that airline services are teetering on the brink. Travel bans are rolling out across the globe, businesses are cancelling travel, conferences have been cancelled and vacationers are stayingcation.

On Wednesday, American Airlines took out of circulation half of all middle seats and all seats adjacent to flight attendant jump seats on every flight to provide more social distancing. The airline will also be proactive in reassigning seats to create more space between customers beginning March 24.

American will offer limited food and drink options from March 27 through April 30 to provide minimal contact between flight attendants and customers and offer more social distancing. The reduced service will be based on flight length and destination.

Some US leaders defy measures aimed at curbing spread

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The State Department has advised against all international travel because of the coronavirus, but that didn't stop Secretary of State Mike Pompeo from flying to Afghanistan this week.

Gyms across the nation's capital are shuttered, but Sen. Rand Paul, an eye doctor, still managed a work-out at the Senate on Sunday morning as he awaited the results of a coronavirus test. It came back positive.

The guidance against shaking hands? That hasn't always applied to President Donald Trump, whose penchant for pressing the flesh continued even after public health officials in his administration were warning that such bodily contact could facilitate the spread of the

contagious virus. Practice social distancing? Daily White House briefings involve Trump and other senior officials crowded around a podium.

Even as the country has largely hunkered down, heeding the guidance of health experts and the directives of state leaders, some powerful people in Washington have defied preventative measures aimed at curbing the spread. Their business-as-usual actions are at odds with the restrictions everyday Americans find themselves under, and with the government's own messaging.

Some human behavior experts say the "do as I say, not as I do" ethos seemingly on display is common among powerful officials, who may be inclined to think they don't have to follow rules for the general public in the same way or who can easily dissociate their own actions from what they say is best for others.

"When we have high power, we think of ourselves as exceptional as if the rules don't apply to us," said Maurice Schweitzer, a professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania who has researched

behavior and decision-making.

In Pompeo's case, the State Department says the unannounced trip — coming amid a near-global travel shutdown — was necessary and urgent because of political turmoil in Afghanistan that U.S. officials fear could threaten a recent U.S.-Taliban peace deal that calls for American troop withdrawals. Pompeo left Kabul on Monday without being able to secure a power-sharing deal.

Some of the behavior by other officials has drawn rebukes.

Asked in a Science Magazine interview about Trump shaking hands, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said he tells White House staff that "we should not be doing that. Not only that — we should be physically separating a bit more on those press conferences."

Several senators, scolded Paul, R-Ky., for refusing to self-quarantine after he'd been tested. The doctor overseeing the government's coronavirus response suggested that Paul's actions fell short of model "personal responsibility."

Paul went into quarantine Sunday after learning his results. His announcement led Utah's two GOP senators, Mike Lee and Mitt Romney, to place themselves into quarantine.

Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, said in an interview with Newsy, an online and streaming news site, that Paul's actions were "irresponsible" and that senators in general have been acting as if they were somehow immune to getting sick.

Trump raised eyebrows among public health specialists when he shook the hands of retail and health industry specialists at a Rose Garden news conference two weeks ago. He acknowledged Monday that shaking hands had been a hard habit to break.

Even now, he stands close to other officials at White House briefings, including Vice President Mike Pence. By contrast, Defense Secretary Mark Esper began separating from his deputy as a precaution.

"The problem," said Schweitzer, the Wharton professor, "is that the mixed messages sow confusion, and it seems disorganized, undisciplined, chaotic."



Paul

against shaking hands? That hasn't always applied to President Donald Trump, whose penchant for pressing the flesh continued even after public health officials in his administration were warning that such bodily contact could facilitate the spread of the

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Spain's deaths leap; Prince Charles infected

BY ARITZ PARRA
AND DAVID RISING
Associated Press

MADRID — The death toll in Spain from the coronavirus shot up by more than 700 on Wednesday, surpassing China and now second only to Italy as the pandemic spread rapidly in Europe, with even Britain's Prince Charles testing positive for the virus.

In India, the world's largest democracy, the government put its 1.3 billion people on lockdown.

Spain recorded a record daily increase of 738 deaths, pushing it to 3,434 overall and past China's 3,285, the Ministry of Health said. The country's infections rose by 20% to 47,610, and more than 5,000 have recovered.

Fernando Simon, head of Spain's health emergency coordination center, said that he hoped the numbers would peak soon.

"If we are not already at the peak, we are very close," he said. "I cannot say that we have reached it."

Even once the numbers crest, it would be "counterproductive" to think about relaxing restrictions anytime soon, he added.

The elderly are among the most vulnerable to the coronavirus, and Spain's nursing home system has been hit particularly hard. Prosecutors are investigating several homes after military troops disinfecting them discovered elderly people living among suspected victims who had died.

Spanish media reported that 23 residents of a Madrid retirement home had died from COVID-19 or symptoms related to the new virus, news reports said. The residence hung up when called by The Associated Press, but its management released a statement saying that it had been

pleading for more staff and supplies, including virus tests, after 55 of its workers had been forced to take medical leave.

National police also arrested two people in southern Spain on Tuesday for throwing stones and other debris at a convoy of ambulances and police vehicles, as 28 elderly people were being transferred from a nursing home with a high number of infections to another facility in their town.

With its health system overwhelmed, Spanish hotels have been converted into hospitals and a Madrid ice rink is being used as a temporary morgue. Lawmakers were set to extend the country's lockdown for two more weeks to April 12.

Charles, 71, heir to the British throne, is showing mild symptoms of COVID-19 and is self-isolating at a royal estate in Scotland, his office said, adding that his wife, Camilla, has tested negative.

Charles "has been displaying mild symptoms but otherwise remains in good health and has been working from home throughout the last few days as usual," it said.

India, where the massive lockdown is underway, has only about 450 cases due to limited testing. Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned that if he didn't act now, however, it could set the country back decades.

His unprecedented move is aimed at keeping the virus from overwhelming its fragile health care system, as it has done in parts of Europe and threatens to do in U.S. hotspots like New York. Everything but essential services like supermarkets were closed. Normally busy railway stations in New Delhi were deserted and streets were eerily silent.

Italy has been the hardest-hit nation in Europe with more



NARIMAN EL-MOFTY/AP

Municipal workers sanitize the walkways around the Giza pyramid complex in the hopes of curbing the spread of the new coronavirus outbreak in Egypt on Wednesday.

than 69,000 infections and 6,800 deaths.

Authorities are investigating if a hotly contested Champions League soccer game in Milan in February poured rocket fuel on the crisis that is overwhelming Italian hospitals. Italian doctors are being forced to choose who will receive desperately needed ventilators and who won't.

Germany's parliament was set to approve a series of measures that will allow the government to offer aid totaling more than \$1.1 trillion for the country of 83 million people.

There are signs that drastic measures to keep people away from one another can push back

the spread of the illness and flatten the infection curve. China's Hubei province, where the outbreak was first spotted late last year, finally started lifting its lockdown.

Some train stations and bus services reopened in Hubei, and people who passed a health check were allowed to travel for the first time since January. A similar easing in the hard-hit epicenter of Wuhan is planned for April 8.

Cases edged up in countries with fragile health care systems. Virus cases in South Africa rose to 709 as the country got ready to go on lockdown Friday, and Russia reported 163 new cases overnight for 658 total.

Russia's prime minister ordered provincial governors to move more quickly to ready hospital beds for patients as the outbreak spreads across the vast country, and President Vladimir Putin ordered the military to train for helping handle the pandemic.

In New Zealand, the government declared an emergency before an unprecedented lockdown began.

"I have one simple message for New Zealanders today as we head into the next four weeks: Stay at home," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said. "It will break the chain of transmission and it will save lives."

Aid group says Middle East lockdowns hinder humanitarian efforts

Associated Press

"If supermarkets and pharmacies can remain operational during this crisis, then so should the delivery of humanitarian aid," he added.

Countries across the Middle East have imposed sweeping measures to prevent its spread, including closing their borders, canceling flights and in some cases imposing round-the-clock curfews that confine people to their homes.

The Israeli government on Wednesday approved new restrictions, including the closure of all synagogues. Authorities across the region have already shuttered major holy sites sacred to Christians, Muslims and Jews.

Many in Israel's insular ultra-Orthodox communities have defined restrictions on public gatherings, despite the pleas of rabbis and local authorities. That has led to tensions with authorities and, in at least one case, scuffles with police.

The order to close the synagogues reportedly came over the objection of Israel's health min-

ister, himself an ultra-Orthodox Jew.

Twenty-nine percent of those who contracted the virus in Israel were infected in a synagogue or a yeshiva, according to an analysis by the National Information and Knowledge Center for the Fight Against the Coronavirus, which has been advising the Health Ministry.

The new restrictions in Israel will bar most people from venturing more than 328 feet from their homes. More than 2,100 Israelis have been infected, with 37 in serious condition. Five elderly Israelis with pre-existing medical conditions have died.

The Palestinian Authority, which governs parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, has ordered a full lockdown and halted travel between cities, towns and villages. Sixty cases have been reported in the West Bank and another two in Gaza.

Late Tuesday, hundreds of people in the northern West Bank town of Jenin, including dozens of armed men, defied the restric-

tions when they held a rally to celebrate the release of a Palestinian prisoner from an Israeli jail.

Also late Tuesday, the Palestinian Authority ordered all Palestinian workers to return to the West Bank from Israel, which had allowed around 65,000 to stay and work during the crisis.

In Libya, officials said that a 73-year-old man who entered from neighboring Tunisia on March 5 tested positive. The Libyan patient had recently traveled to Saudi Arabia, according to Libya's National Center for Disease Control, and was receiving medical treatment for his fever and cough in isolation at a Tripoli hospital.

In neighboring Egypt, Prime Minister Moustafa Madbouly said that a nationwide curfew from 7 p.m. until 6 a.m. would go into effect Wednesday. Egypt has confirmed 402 cases and 22 fatalities, including two senior military officers who were involved in efforts to disinfect public places.

Egypt is battling the worst outbreak in the region, with over

27,000 confirmed cases and a death toll of at least 2,077. Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said Wednesday.

Afghanistan imposed a lockdown on its western Herat province, which borders Iran and where the largest number of cases has been detected. Afghan authorities have reported 76 cases and two deaths. The NATO-led coalition in Afghanistan has reported four cases among soldiers who recently arrived in Kabul.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, expanded its curfew hours in the cities of Mecca and Medina, home to Islam's holiest sites, as well as the capital, Riyadh. Residents must now remain inside their homes from 3 p.m. to 6 a.m. The kingdom also banned travel in or out of the three governorates. Saudi Arabia has reported 676 cases.

Pakistan halted all domestic passenger flights beginning Thursday after reporting nearly 10,000 total cases, including seven deaths and 19 who recovered. It had previously suspended train service and international flights.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Criminals capitalize on global fear, panic

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Thieves sell fake surgical masks. A clinic sells fake COVID-19 tests. Hate groups encourage sick members to infect law enforcement officers. Imposters pose as public health officials. Con artists peddle fake cures and financial scams.

As the coronavirus pandemic spreads, so too do the crimes related to it — transgressions that capitalize on fear, panic and the urge to lay blame, and add to the burden on law enforcement agencies trying to protect vulnerable citizens.

"It is really disheartening in a time like this that someone would take advantage of the community and take them in a time of need," Tucson, Ariz., Police Sgt. Pete Dugan said.

Everyday life has essentially stopped in many countries in a bid to slow the virus, and some crimes have been declining. But reports of virus-related fraud are on the rise, along with concerns about hate crimes.

President Donald Trump and others have taken to calling the virus the "Chinese coronavirus," even as scientists have said that the disease has nothing to do with Asian ethnicity. But the president dismissed the idea that his comments could fuel hate crimes.



A health care worker prepares to collect a sample to test for COVID-19 at a drive-thru testing site in Miami.

WILFREDO LEE/AP

"It's not racist at all," Trump has said.

In Los Angeles, a 16-year-old boy of Asian descent said that other students bullied him and accused him of carrying the virus. In New York, a man on the subway sprayed an Asian passenger with Febreze and verbally abused him. State Attorney General Letitia James set up a hotline for New Yorkers to report hate crimes in the country's outbreak epicenter.

The Anti-Defamation League, which tracks hate groups, blames the virus for elevating racist and anti-Semitic messages, including suggesting that Jews are somehow responsible for the pandemic. Some hate groups have suggested tainting doorknobs or other surfaces with the virus so that FBI and police officers fall ill.

"If any of you get this, I expect you to spend as much time as possible with our enemies," one wrote.

Hundreds of masks have been stolen in Portland, Ore., amid shortages for health care workers. A Missouri man who was coughing told two store clerks

he had a high fever. He was arrested after police said that he threatened to give the employees coronavirus. People in Pennsylvania and Illinois were accused of similar crimes. Texas prosecutors brought charges against someone who falsely claimed on social media to have tested positive for COVID-19.

In a memo issued Tuesday, Deputy Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen told prosecutors that they could charge people who threaten to spread the new coronavirus under U.S. terrorism statutes because the Justice Department considers it a "biological agent" under the law. In such cases, suspects could be charged with a number of offenses, including possessing or developing a biological agent as a weapon, he said.

"Threats or attempt to use COVID-19 as a weapon against Americans will not be tolerated," Rosen wrote in the memo to U.S. attorneys across the country and the heads of all Justice Department agencies, including the FBI.

Meanwhile, police in Bowie, Md., are investigating reports of a man wearing an orange vest and blue surgical mask who approached people at two homes claiming to be inspecting for the coronavirus. He actually entered

one home before a resident confronted him. A similar scam was sweeping through Germany.

The World Health Organization and other authorities are also working to debunk spurious claims about possible cures. They include false assertions that silver, bleach, and garlic could protect against the coronavirus, or that bananas prevent it.

In Uganda, the parliament speaker endorsed a businessman who said that he had discovered a chemical that "instantly kills" the virus. Speaker Rebecca Kadaga announced that the businessman had offered to produce the "treatment" in Uganda and it would go on the market shortly.

Kadaga's comments were widely mocked because the product is actually a disinfectant, according to the Ugandan firm that will produce the chemical, not to be ingested.

Fraudsters purport to collect contaminated banknotes in South Africa. And police busted a clinic selling false testing kits in Kenya.

In the U.S., the Justice Department created a central fraud hotline (1-866-720-5721 or disaster@leo.gov) and has ordered U.S. attorneys to appoint special coronavirus fraud coordinators.

Rare disease treatment status given to experimental drug

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The pharmaceutical giant that makes a promising coronavirus drug has registered it as a rare disease treatment with U.S. regulators, a status that potentially be worth millions in tax breaks and competition-free sales.

What that specialty status will actually mean for the marketing or profitability of Gilead Sciences' experimental drug remdesivir isn't clear. The drugmaker did not immediately respond Tuesday to requests for comment.

Experts who have studied the so-called "orphan drug" program said that the company's request — and the Food and Drug Administration's decision to grant it — seem inappropriate given the rapidly expanding threat of the viral outbreak.

The FDA granted the status on Monday, according to the agency's website. If approved, Gilead Sciences would receive seven

years of exclusive U.S. marketing for the drug and tax credits on its research and development costs.

Congress created the orphan drug program more than 35 years ago to encourage companies to develop drugs for niche diseases and conditions that might not otherwise be profitable. But since then, filing for orphan status has become a standard pharmaceutical industry tactic to extend the profitability of drugs and block competitors.

"It seems like a misuse of the Orphan Drug Act, even though technically it's within the bounds of the law," said Dr. Aaron Kesselheim, a Harvard Medical School health policy expert. "There's no expectation here that this drug wouldn't be able to generate appropriate revenue for the manufacturer."

Kesselheim said that a number of the early AIDS drugs also received orphan drug status in the 1980s and 1990s, but then went on

to generate billions in sales.

But Tyler Van Buren, a senior research analyst at the financial services firm Piper Sandler, called Gilead's filing "pretty standard."

"It says nothing about profiting off the pandemic, but it does provide protection if remdesivir turns into a business in subsequent years," he said.

In recent years, the orphan drug program has come under scrutiny from the media, Congress and government inspectors amid concerns that it is being misused to protect six-figure prices on specialty drugs. Roughly half of the 48 new drugs approved by the agency last year received orphan drug designation. Many were priced well above \$100,000 for a year's supply, including drugs for cancer, muscular dystrophy and other genetic disorders.

The nonprofit Public Citizen group said in a statement that the U.S. government should be "ur-



ANDREW HARNIK/AP

Gilead Sciences CEO Daniel O'Day speaks at a meeting earlier this month with President Donald Trump, members of the Coronavirus Task Force, and pharmaceutical executives in the Cabinet Room of the White House in Washington.

gently concerned" with the affordability of remdesivir.

Gilead's chairman and CEO, Daniel O'Day, has previously said that the company hasn't discussed

with any governments how much remdesivir will cost.

"The topic of pricing comes up once you know the medicine works," he said.

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NATION

Biden's challenge is getting coverage during virus crisis

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE
AND BILL BARROW
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden is working to reassert himself in national politics three weeks after taking command of the Democratic presidential primary.

Like most Americans, Biden has stayed close to home recently to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. That — and a slow shift to the new online-only reality of the campaign — has left him with a lower profile as much of the nation has focused on the pandemic and President Donald Trump's response to it.

But from a newly constructed television studio in his Wilmington, Del., home, Biden sat for a series of high-profile interviews Tuesday. The appearances were a preview of a more public role he's hoping to assume in the coming weeks as he emerges as the Democratic counter to Trump.

In an interview with CNN, Biden took an increasingly aggressive stance against the president's coronavirus response, urging him to "stop talking and start listening" to the medical experts."

Guy Cecil, chairman of Priorities USA, the major Democratic super PAC, said he's glad to see a commitment from Biden to take on a more robust schedule of public and media appearances.

"We need to be holding this administration accountable, and there's no way to do that if you're not speaking out," he said.

But with the major networks focused daily on crisis and con-

troversy, Biden's more measured tone has sometimes struggled to break through.

On Monday, Biden broadcast an address on the outbreak, but his remarks, which came at the same time as a briefing by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, weren't picked up live by any of the major networks. On Tuesday, when Biden appeared on "The View," some stations cut away to briefings from local leaders on the virus.

Cecil acknowledged the difficulty Biden and the broader Democratic Party face getting coverage for their message and said it's one of the reasons his group recently launched a multimillion-dollar advertising blitz around Trump's coronavirus response.

"In order for people to break through, in order to really hold the president accountable, sometimes the best way you can do that is simply by making sure you're on people's TV screens, and paying for it," he said.

Another challenge for Biden: remaining relevant and engaged in the conversation and response from a notably peripheral position as the likely-but-not-quite-official nominee of the Democratic Party, and one who is no longer serving in public office.

While Bernie Sanders' path to the Democratic presidential nomination is increasingly mathematically improbable, the Vermont senator isn't exiting the race and has done his own online events and media appearances emphasizing his efforts in the Senate to respond to the virus.

Virus briefings are the new campaign rallies for Trump

By JILL COLVIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has a new daily ritual now that the pandemic has put the kibosh on the signature campaign rallies that helped him get elected four years ago: the coronavirus briefing.

Standing on the once-abandoned White House briefing room stage flanked by public health experts, Trump holds court with reporters and directly addresses the American people, providing updates on his administration's efforts to combat the pandemic and trying to demonstrate that he's in charge.

The updates are far more staid than his raucous rallies and lack the adoring crowds and "Lock her up!" chants of the political gatherings. But they include many of the same features as his now-on-ice mass rallies: plenty of self-congratulation and airing of grievances, press bashing, tirades against his critics and an ample dose of misleading information.

That, combined with measured updates from public health officials, has created a sometimes confusing split screen for Americans watching at home, many under stay-at-home restrictions and anxiously tuning in to cable news for updates.

"I don't want to stand here for two hours and do this," Trump told reporters during Monday's marathon briefing, which stretched to nearly two hours. "But I think it's important. ... Give us any question about it because I think it's important for the public to know."

For the first few days of the crisis, the briefings were led by Vice President Mike Pence, who offered buttoned-up updates in a calming, paternal tone. But Trump, who never likes to cede the spotlight, quickly decided to make himself the star of the daily show.

Now, every day of the week, including Tuesday, when he sat down for a separate Fox News town hall in the Rose Garden, Trump emerges from behind closed doors and reads a summary of his administration's latest efforts. Then he invites other administration officials to make remarks from the often-crowded stage where social distancing recommendations are flouted.

Then he opens things up for questions, and the dis-

cussion can go in many directions.

Trump's disposition varies. On some days, he has struck an urgent tone, calling on Americans to come together to defeat a common enemy. On others, he has angrily defended his administration's handling of the pandemic and lashed out at reporters, including those who have pressed him on the economic impact of mass closures, testing shortfalls and the struggles of doctors and nurses to find basic supplies.

Some around Trump have suggested that less is more — that he only attend the briefings when there is big news to announce.

"You want to keep the air of importance any time he steps into the room," said former Trump communications aide Jason Miller. But Trump has told people that he knows the nation is watching and that he doesn't want to give up the stage to deputies, who in some cases have refuted his commentary in real time on stage.

The Trump briefings, which often include information that is later clarified or corrected, stand in sharp contrast to those of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, which have been widely praised. While the Democrat has generally tried to provide an even-kneed, fact-based approach aided by endless PowerPoint slides, he was far more urgent Tuesday as he pleaded with the federal government to do more to help the state as it struggles to cope with a flood of more than 25,000 confirmed coronavirus cases.

"What am I going to do with 400 ventilators?" Cuomo bellowed in response to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's latest offer. "You pick the 26,000 people who are going to die because you only sent 400 ventilators!"

Margaret Sullivan, media columnist for The Washington Post, said Monday that the briefings were beginning to sound like substitutes for Trump's campaign rallies and were working against the goal of giving the public critical and truthful information.

"They have become a daily stage for Trump to play his greatest hits to captive audience members," she wrote.

MSNBC star Rachel Maddow went even further. "All of us should stop broadcasting it, honestly," she said. "It's going to cost lives."

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

As cases surge in Calif., link to teen's death unclear

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles County health officials backtracked Tuesday on their announcement that a child died from coronavirus, saying it's possible the death was caused by something else.

During their daily briefing, the county health department said the unidentified child from Lancaster was among four new deaths.

Hours later, after Gov. Gavin Newsom had cited the death of the teenager as evidence the virus can strike anyone, the county issued a new statement.

"Though early tests indicated a positive result for COVID-19, the case is complex and there may be an alternate explanation for this fatality" and the case will need evaluation by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the statement said.

Lancaster Mayor R. Rex Parris said a 17-year-old boy had been hospitalized with respiratory problems and died from septic shock. Parris said the boy's father also has coronavirus and worked in a job where he had close contact with the public.

High NY infection rate risky for health workers

NEW YORK — A "cacophony of coughing" in packed emergency rooms. Beds squeezed in wherever there is space. Overworked, sleep-deprived doctors and nurses rationed to one face mask a day and wracked by worry about a dwindling number of available ventilators.

Such is the reality inside New York City's hospitals, which have become the war-zone-like epicenter of the nation's coronavirus crisis.

Faced with an infection rate that is five times that of the rest of the country, health workers are putting themselves at risk to fight a tide of sickness that's getting worse by the day.

"You're on 100% of the time — no matter what," said Dr. Jolion McGreevy, medical director of The Mount Sinai Hospital emergency department. "It's been a month of full force, and that's certainly very stressful."

Patients initially showed up with fairly mild symptoms, concerned they contracted coronavirus. That shifted over the past week, McGreevy said, and now hospitals are receiving far sicker patients in need of life-saving intervention.

"We knew it was coming," he said. "We saw it in Italy and other places so we were prepared for it, and now we're seeing it."

Ala. unemployment claims skyrocket

MONTGOMERY — Thousands of Alabamians are filing for unemployment benefits, sometimes overwhelming the state application system, as the coronavirus pandemic causes workplaces

to temporarily close or reduce operations.

Nearly 17,000 people filed unemployment claims over just two days — Sunday and Monday, according to preliminary numbers given by Alabama Department of Labor spokeswoman Tara Hutchison.

Health officials have acknowledged the economic cost of mandatory closures, but say they're crucial to slow the outbreak as caseloads grow exponentially, threatening to overwhelm hospitals.

Republican Gov. Kay Ivey said she was following the lead of President Donald Trump, and expressed reluctance on Tuesday to join other governors in issuing a statewide order shutting down nonessential activities.

SC schools likely to close through April

COLUMBIA — South Carolina schools will likely be closed through at least April because of the new coronavirus, the governor announced Tuesday.

State health officials reported two additional deaths from COVID-19.

Gov. Henry McMaster didn't issue an order closing schools through April, but said he and state Education Superintendent Molly Spearman see little choice but to keep schools closed for four more weeks for the safety of students, teachers and the public.

Schools were first closed March 16. School districts are now having students access lessons online or sending packets of work to homes on school buses.

1st Alaskan victim was in high-risk group

JUNEAU — Alaska has recorded its first death from the coronavirus, state officials said Tuesday evening.

Dr. Anne Zink, the state's chief medical officer, said the elderly person in a high risk group contracted the virus and died in Washington state.

The person had not recently traveled to Alaska and had been in Washington for a while. No other details about the person, including age or gender, were released.

Even though the death was in Washington state, Zink said the death is counted for Alaska under rules from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention since the person was an Alaska resident.

Ariz. mayors slam edict regarding golf courses

PHOENIX — Municipal leaders criticized Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey on Tuesday over his decision to classify some businesses like golf courses as "essential" during the coronavirus pandemic.

Mayors of five different cities, including Tucson and Flagstaff,

Comparing coronavirus and the flu

COVID-19

Caused by one virus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome or SARS-CoV-2.

No vaccine is available at this time, though trials are in progress.

INFLUENZA

Caused by any of several different types and strains of influenza viruses.

A vaccine is available to prevent dangerous types or reduce severity.

INFECTIONS

As of March 25, 2020

COVID-19		INFLUENZA	
In U.S.	Worldwide	In U.S.	Worldwide
55,238	436,538	Up to 45 million	Up to 1 billion
DEATHS		TRANSMISSION	
In U.S.	Worldwide	In U.S.	Worldwide
802	19,643	Up to 61,000	Up to 646,000

Updates on the military and the coronavirus are at stripes.com/coronavirus

SOURCES: Johns Hopkins, Worldometers

ANDREA VILLARI/Stars and Stripes

sent Ducey, a Republican, a letter saying his executive order should not have included golf courses and payday lenders in the definition of "essential services" that cannot be shut down in response to the outbreak. They also requested a statewide moratorium on evictions and foreclosures.

Ducey agreed to pause evictions for 120 days for renters who are quarantining or struggling from the economic fallout. To qualify, renters must provide documentation that they've been ordered to quarantine, have a health condition that leaves them vulnerable or suffered a substantial income loss. They'll also have to acknowledge in writing that their lease terms haven't changed.

Ind. health chief warns cases will increase

INDIANAPOLIS — Top Indiana officials warned Tuesday that the state's rapid jump in coronavirus illnesses is just the

beginning and that obeying a new stay-at-home order is necessary, even as President Donald Trump suggested restrictions around the country could be relaxed in little more than two weeks.

The order from Gov. Eric Holcomb takes effect Wednesday. Indiana saw its number of confirmed COVID-19 cases grow to 365 on Tuesday — more than 12 times what state health officials reported a week earlier. Indiana's coronavirus-related deaths have gone from two to 12 during that time.

Dr. Kristina Box, the state health commissioner, said the state's hospitals were seeking additional sources of protective equipment for health care workers along with monitoring intensive care unit bed and ventilator capacity at major hospitals for the coming weeks.

"We're still in the very early parts of this outbreak," Box said. "We will continue to see more cases."

Trump OKs disaster declaration for La.

BATON ROUGE — President Donald Trump on Tuesday evening granted a federal disaster declaration exists in Louisiana and ordered assistance to supplement recovery efforts in the areas affected by COVID-19.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards on Tuesday asked the White House to declare a major disaster in his state to free up more direct federal aid to cope with the surging coronavirus outbreak, warning that the New Orleans area could run out of hospital beds by April. Edwards' request came as the number of people in Louisiana confirmed to have COVID-19 surged to nearly 1,400. Forty-six residents have died from the disease, according to the state health department.

Edwards issued a "stay at home" order for most of Louisiana's 4.6 million residents that began Monday evening.

Frazz



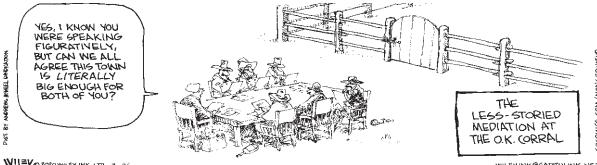
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



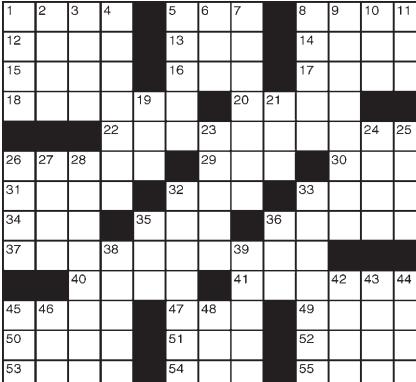
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

54 Profit
55 Ranch visitor

25 Beatty and Rorem
26 Tropical tree
27 "The Time Machine" people
28 Clog-busting tools
32 Groom's attendant
33 Began again
35 Airport screening org.
36 SSW opposite
38 Ill-suited
39 18th president
42 Capital of Azerbaijan
43 Kept tabs on 44 Proboscis
45 YMCA class
46 Haw precenter
48 "See ya!"

Answer to Previous Puzzle

E	S	T	R	A	Y
H	U	T	E	A	E
S	A	R	S	I	D
G	L	O	I	A	T
T	O	S	S	T	E
S	I	L	O	N	M
S	I	A	M	E	E
M	A	N	T	A	N
P	I	G	L	R	O
G	L	O	R	E	F
S	T	E	F	A	A
S	T	E	F	I	S
S	E	L	A	H	H
S	O	L	I	S	I
S	O	L	I	D	E
S	E	E	L	N	N

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CRYPTOQUIP

Q N V U T R L C N S L N G Q D L N D
N G P A O L S U R U A O J D H O U
H N R E T L C J X U U P N C O U D R J
D L P L G X : R N L G C C O U V N R
J E T L G N R .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE MYTHICAL HELL'S TEMPERATURES ARE ACTUALLY PRETTY DARN GOOD. IT'S IN THE EIGHTIES IN HADES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals T

FACES



Danny Clinch

Pearl Jam, from left: Stone Gossard, Matt Cameron, Eddie Vedder, Jeff Ament and Mike McCready. The band's first album in seven years, "Gigaton," comes out Friday.

What to stream while staying put

'Just Mercy,' new albums from Pearl Jam and Dua Lipa among entertainment options during coronavirus isolation

Associated Press

Yes, the coronavirus pandemic has canceled concert tours, shut down movie theaters and closed down some bookstores, but there's still plenty to listen to, watch and read while self-distancing.

This week's releases include new albums from Pearl Jam and Dua Lipa, several worthwhile films available for rent and a new novel that tells a story of isolation set against the backdrop of another crisis. There are also some older offerings, including one of Scarlett Johansson's early films, all headed to TV or streaming devices near you.

Here's a collection curated by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists of what's arriving on TV, streaming services, music and book platforms this week.

Movies

A few movies arrive to video-on-demand slightly early this week, including the Harry Quinn spinoff "Birds of Prey" and "The Way Back," a sports redemption tale about alcoholism featuring a deeply felt performance by Ben Affleck. But don't overlook the sturdy legal thriller "Just Mercy," which became available to rent Tuesday, with Michael B. Jordan and Jamie Foxx. Adapted from the memoir by civil rights attorney Bryan Stevenson, the film by director Destin Daniel Cretton ("Short Term 12") is about the Harvard-trained lawyer's efforts in a small Alabama town to defend death-row inmates. While it doesn't break much new ground, "Just Mercy" finds plenty of power in its understated tone and affecting performances.

Directed by Terry Zwigoff: "The Great

independent cinema" is how the Criterion Channel aptly describes Zwigoff in this series of four films that debuted Monday on the streaming service. In sardonic non-fiction and fiction films, Zwigoff combed the land for American oddballs and pockets of wry eccentricity. Included here is Zwigoff's 1995 indelible documentary portrait of comic-book artist Robert Crumb, "Cruel," and "Ghost World," the deadpan 2001 indie comedy that was an early breakout for Scarlett Johansson.

"A Wrinkle in Time": Disney Plus on Wednesday added Ava DuVernay's adaptation of Madeleine L'Engle's sci-fi coming-of-age tale about a girl's self-discovery across the space-time continuum. In her review, AP's Jocelyn Noveck called it "all over the map, in every way possible," but praised the film's diverse casting and newcomer Storm Reid.

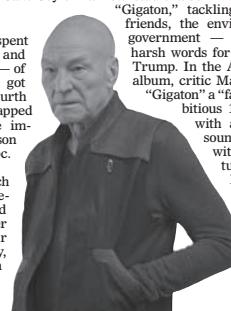
— Jake Coyle

Television

"This Is Us": viewers who spent the season following the ups and downs — many, many downs — of the extended Pearson family got one last episode when the fourth season of the NBC drama wrapped Tuesday. Get tissue and the immediate longing for next season ready by streaming it at nbc.com/thisisus.

"Star Trek: Picard," which heralded Patrick Stewart's return as the stalwart retired Starfleet admiral and former captain, concludes its first year on CBS All Access on Thursday, with the season finale "Et in Arcadia Ego, Part 2." A sophomore year is planned.

— Lynn Elber



Patrick Stewart appears in a scene from the CBS All Access series "Star Trek: Picard." The series concludes its first season Thursday.

CBS/AP

Music

Dua Lipa, "Future Nostalgia": While most musicians have scrapped concert plans and changed album release dates due to the rapidly spreading coronavirus, Dua Lipa has moved up the date to her anticipated sophomore project. Originally due to be released April 3, "Future Nostalgia" is now coming out Friday. It's the follow-up to Lipa's 2017 self-titled debut, which is the most Streamed album by a female artist in Spotify history and helped the British singer win two Grammy Awards last year, including best new artist. "Future Nostalgia" is already off to a powerful start with the hit "Don't Start Now," which has reached the No. 2 spot on Billboard's Hot 100 chart.

Pearl Jam, "Gigaton": It's been seven years since rock icons Pearl Jam released a new studio album. They're back with

"Gigaton," tackling topics like lost friends, the environment and the government — with particularly harsh words for President Donald Trump. In the AP's review of the album, critic Mark Kennedy calls "Gigaton" a "fascinating and ambitious 12-track collection with a cleaner, crisper sound that is studded with interesting textures, topped by Eddie Vedder's still-indignant voice."

— Mesfin Fekadu

Books

"The Glass Hotel": It's Emily St. John Mandel's first novel since "Station Eleven," her all-too-timely book about a devastating pandemic. "The Glass Hotel" may well prove just as timely — a story of isolation and displacement set against the financial crisis of 2008.

"The City We Became": The latest novel from award-winning science fiction-fantasy writer N.K. Jemisin may also prove too relevant. "The City We Became" is a surreal and disorienting narrative set in New York City, where people lose their memories or discover graffiti with mysterious power.

— Hillel Italie

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: Man bit off part of girlfriend's finger

NM ARTESIA — A New Mexico man faces charges after police said he bit off a piece of his girlfriend's finger following an argument over a cellphone in bed.

Court records show Isiah Thompson of Artesia was arrested for aggravated battery against a household member, the Carlsbad Current-Argus reported.

According to a criminal complaint, when Artesia Police responded to a report of a finger bitten off, an officer found nearly a quarter-inch of Aliah Encinias-Martinez left ring finger missing.

Encinias-Martinez told officers she asked Thompson, 26, to put down his cellphone and go to sleep for the night.

After taking the phone from Thompson, Encinias-Martinez said she threw the phone and Thompson then bit her left finger.

Officials warn to flush only toilet paper

VA NORFOLK — Toilet paper has become a scarce commodity as the coronavirus spreads. But sanitation officials in southeastern Virginia are still warning people to flush only toilet paper and nothing else.

The Virginian-Pilot reported that local officials were anticipating possible backups if overflows at treatment facilities from people flushing items other than toilet paper.

Lacie Wever, a spokeswoman for Hampton Roads Sanitation District, said this is not the time for people to flush personal hygiene wipes or cleaning cloths. She said that even if a package says a product is flushable, do not flush it.

Bicentennial book highlights black heritage

AL MONTGOMERY — Alabama's bicentennial is over, but a new book will highlight 200 years of African American history in the state.

A coffee table book titled "The Future Emerges from the Past: Celebrating 200 Years of Alabama's African American History and Culture" is being published by the Alabama Bicentennial Commission.

The book will look at the period of slavery through the Civil War and into the modern civil rights movement. It highlight topics including the recent discovery near Mobile of the Clotilda, the last ship to bring African captives to the United States for enslavement.

The book costs \$19.95, and the commission said proceeds will go to the United Negro College Fund Birmingham.

Highways set to debut digital messaging signs

NV LAS VEGAS — More than 40 messaging boards were set to begin operation on Las Vegas' busiest highways.

The Las Vegas Review Journal



ROBERT F. BUKATY/AP

Spring is (not) in the air

Ellen Werner enjoys the snow-covered landscape following an early spring snowstorm that dumped several inches of heavy, wet snow, Tuesday in Freeport, Maine. Werner, of New York City, was self-quarantining at a condo in Freeport to be near her children. She said she is not sick but wanted to be out of New York.

reported that the 42 digital traffic boards along Interstate 15 and U.S. Highway 95 were launched this week.

The LED signs will give real-time driver information. This includes crashes, speed limit changes and lane restrictions.

The digital signs will allow for fluctuations of speed limits in hopes of reducing traffic congestion.

Grand jury indicts 9 in vehicle title fraud case

AZ PHOENIX — An Arizona grand jury indicted nine people accused of running an illegal operation that produced tens of thousands of titles for vehicles being sold in 42 states.

Prosecutors said the nine people indicted were accused of conspiring since 2015 to fraudulently obtain Arizona car dealership licenses and of consigning those dealership licenses to paying subscribers via an online membership service.

Over 1,500 subscribers purchased thousands of vehicles in 42 states and the indicted defendants were accused of fraudulently titling more than 30,000 vehicles during the course of this scheme.

Prosecutors say the amount of illegal proceeds associated with the scheme is alleged to be at least \$6.8 million.

THE CENSUS

48

The record number of monk seal pups born in the main Hawaiian Islands in 2019. The Hawaiian Monk Seal Research Program's 2019 population assessment found the number remained about the same as the 2018 count of 1,400 seals, West Hawaii Today reported. The Hawaiian monk seal population faces continuing threats including toxoplasma, fisheries interactions and intentional killings, the program said.

Gas leak may have sparked home explosion

MI DETROIT — A 65-year-old man was killed and two other people injured following a house explosion in Detroit that may have been sparked by a gas leak and lit crack cocaine pipe.

A woman "claimed she was lighting a crack pipe when the explosion happened," Detroit Deputy Fire Commissioner Dave Fornell told The Detroit News.

The 46-year-old woman suffered burns to her face, arms and legs and was in a critical condition at a hospital. A 42-year-old man suffered burns and abrasions and was in serious condition at a hospital.

Aquarium, park to undergo renovation

NJ ATLANTIC CITY — A maritime park and aquarium in New Jersey will undergo an approximately \$3.6 mil-

lion renovation as early as this fall, officials said.

The renovations of Gardner's Basin and the Atlantic City Aquarium are part of the city's efforts to make the park more of a tourist destination beyond the boardwalk and casinos, city officials said.

The park's renovations will include restroom updates, parking improvements and electric vehicle charging stations. The aquarium, which hasn't undergone any major repairs in nearly 20 years, will have several improvements, including a new roof, replaced windows and a renovated gift shop.

Man says he regrets defacing synagogue

LA MANDEVILLE — A man charged with spraying anti-Semitic graffiti on a Louisiana synagogue said he regrets his actions and wants to apologize to the congregation.

Authorities arrested Cain Zander Brown about two weeks ago in connection with the September 2018 defacing of the Northside Jewish Congregation in the New Orleans suburb of Mandeville. He was charged with felony hate counts of hate crimes and criminal damage to property.

Brown told The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate in an interview that he now rejects the neo-Nazi views he embraced at the time.

Policy will allow the sale of alcohol to-go

KS TOPEKA — Kansas bars, breweries and restaurants with liquor licenses will be temporarily allowed to sell bottled beer and wine to-go during the pandemic as long as the beverages are opened before leaving the premises and sealed in a proper to-go bag.

After strict restrictions due to the coronavirus effectively ended dine-in service at most establishments, Debbi Beavers, director of Alcoholic Beverage Control, announced the new policy, The Kansas City Star reported.

The policy applies to restaurants with liquor licenses, bars, clubs, farm wineries, micro-breweries, micro-distilleries and liquor stores.

From wire reports

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OPINION

How the COVID-19 recession is like WWII

BY TYLER COWEN
Bloomberg Opinion

The COVID-19 collapse of the worldwide economy is prompting comparisons with earlier major economic adjustments. And while there is lot of discussion about the Great Recession of 2008, the current crisis has more in common with World War II.

For the U.S. in World War II, an economy attacked and a significant portion of the economy was redirected to a wartime effort. With COVID-19, a virus has attacked and a significant portion of the economy has been redirected to enforced leisure at home. Time at home is better than having to fight on Pacific islands, but in some ways the economic effects are similar.

During World War II, the U.S. economy produced many more tanks, guns and medical supplies, and GDP growth measured as robust — especially compared to the bad years of the preceding Great Depression. Yet those good GDP numbers are misleading. Data on personal consumption show that there were fewer goods and services to go around, and most people on the home front felt a distinct sense of privation. Many Americans feel the same right now.

Many of the changes came in the form of diminished quality, so even the published consumption numbers understate the losses. During the war the mediocre can of spam replaced the T-bone steak. Today "yoga by Zoom" is replacing the gym visit, and that is also usually a lesser product. (Canned goods are making a comeback too.)

There are various forecasts circulating for second quarter GDP (presented as annualized rates of change), some of them as scary low as negative 24%. Obviously these are not good signs. But those numbers are not an entirely accurate representation of what is going on.

One piece of good news is that America is likely to see a boom once the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 is gone, and



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

A worker paints plywood covering the windows of a restaurant set for potentially prolonged closure due to the coronavirus pandemic Monday in Kansas City, Mo.

this will resemble the boom that followed World War II. Americans will have spent months postponing their larger consumer purchases. When the time comes, that pent-up demand will be unleashed, and producers of consumer durables will have the inventory to satisfy it. In other words, there is more intertemporal substitution than usual going on.

On the downside, much of the lost consumption will not be recovered, most of all in the service sector. Foregone restaurant meals and music concerts cannot be made up. This will be a very painful recession for face-to-face services, which cannot be diverted to "wartime" production.

As with World War II, one of the biggest dangers today is the risk of unpleasant and unexpected surprises. Those risks include a Eurozone financial crisis and implosion, in troubled states such as Iran, a Saudi balance of payments crisis, or a conflict with China due to rising tensions.

It is difficult to estimate the likelihood of those risks, but they may help explain why the stock market has fallen so much — far more than might be justified by a year or two of bad earnings.

One significant difference between World War II and the COVID-19 crisis is that people knew the war was going to last a long while, and thus there was very little hesitation in committing significant economic resources to the effort. Rather than trying to "prop up" troubled sectors, the U.S. encouraged factories to make tanks instead of automobiles.

Today it is difficult to estimate when matters will return to normal. Is it good policy to prop up small restaurants, so as to enable their full return within a few months? Or will second and third waves of the virus render rapid recovery impossible? In that case it might be better for many of those restaurant workers to switch to driving Amazon delivery trucks, as many of those restaurants will not be reopening.

The course of the recession depends on how accurate these estimates are, but of course these kinds of projections are never very precise. And so far we are largely in the dark.

Economists are debating whether aggregate supply or demand is falling faster right now. Again, the wartime experience is useful here. Aggregate demand can't come back until the supply problems are fixed. Furthermore, demand is suffering from (at least) two problems at once: Many people are losing their jobs, and a lot of demand is being deliberately suppressed (by, among other things, telling people to stay at home). The real issue is where to redirect demand. For that question, public health experts are of more use than Keynesian economists.

Bloomberg Opinion columnist Tyler Cowen is a professor of economics at George Mason University. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of Bloomberg LP and its owners.

All-encompassing crises demand creative leadership

BY ARTHUR L. CYR
Special to Stars and Stripes

“So, first of all, let me assert my belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” This quotation is from the first inaugural address of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The speech capped the ceremony in which he took the oath as chief executive officer of the United States, on March 4, 1933.

The American economy was in a state of collapse, and much of the world gripped in depression. Overseas, many people embraced dictatorship. The new president immediately launched an unprecedented effort to use government to address our problems.

In the crisis of the Great Depression, as in other major challenges, leadership was central. FDR's struggle to overcome paralysis of his legs from polio is relevant. The speech went on to describe “nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed action.”

Today, we expect government to provide leadership, and a lot more. Until the 20th century, catastrophes were regarded as unavoidable “acts of God.” People addressed the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic with stoicism.

The mass media have played a steadily more important role in characterizing terrible events. Photography transformed newspapers by adding sometimes-shocking pictures to text.

Radio and television greatly expanded this impact of information. The internet

and cellphones carry the process further.

Simultaneously, Americans have steadily raised the bar regarding expectations of government. President George W. Bush suffered serious political damage from public perception that he was both ineffective and uncaring in handling Hurricane Katrina devastation in 2005.

A century earlier, another President Roosevelt, Theodore, established the precedent of direct U.S. House involvement to mitigate major disasters. This occurred immediately after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. His initiatives included a quick congressional appropriation of \$2.5 million, a radical move as well as substantive sum for that time.

Teddy Roosevelt also involved the military in humanitarian relief. The U.S. Cavalry rescued 20,000 people, still one of the largest amphibious evacuations in history. Soldiers distributed food, water and medical supplies. Current U.S. Navy hospital ships deployed on both coasts are directly in line with this tradition. More broadly, U.S. military personnel from all services engage in relief efforts for disasters of all sorts, including public health challenges, in literally all regions of the world.

Military methods also restored order. An estimated 500 looters were shot by soldiers and police, including 34 men who attempted to rob U.S. Mint and Treasury buildings that contained \$239 million in bullion and cash.

There was no Federal Emergency Management Agency, created during the Carter administration. Roosevelt instead stressed

the role of the Red Cross.

During relief efforts after the 2010 Haiti earthquake and Hurricane Sandy in 2012, the Obama White House web site linked to the Red Cross. Varied volunteer agencies are heavily engaged in current anti-coronavirus efforts.

Herbert Hoover further developed U.S. disaster relief capabilities and involvement, including overseas humanitarian efforts. During and after the First World War, he led the substantial U.S. Food Administration and American Relief Administration, credited with preventing mass starvation in Europe.

In 1927, Commerce Secretary Hoover spearheaded an enormous humanitarian effort after huge Mississippi River flooding. Hoover was confirmed — temporarily — as a Great American Hero, securing a lock on the 1928 Republican nomination and election to the White House.

In 1965, Hurricane Betsy became the first Gulf Coast storm creating more than \$1 billion in damage. President Lyndon Johnson immediately flew to New Orleans and relentlessly, endlessly visited storm victims, slogging through water to isolated shacks, anxious Secret Service follow-ups and local politicians in tow. Follow-up federal relief was comprehensive.

Today, we assume government is central in dealing with the coronavirus. In facing this public threat, as in the past, mature, insightful leadership is crucial.

Arthur L. Cyr is Claussen Distinguished Professor at Carthage College and author of “After the Cold War.”

OPINION

Pelosi lards stimulus bill with party favors

By HENRY OLSEN

Special to The Washington Post

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., famously said of Obamacare that Congress had to pass the bill to learn what was in it. Perhaps she's hoping the same for her coronavirus stimulus package, which her party unveiled on Tuesday. The document is clearly an exercise in Kabuki theater, since the massive proposal is full of partisan wish-listing and puzzling priorities that will go nowhere.

Others have already pointed out some of the worst aspects of the bill. Pelosi would forgive all outstanding debts for the chronically mismanaged U.S. Postal Service. She would also expand collective bargaining rights for union-represented employees and increase fuel emission standards for vehicles. Those might be worthy ideas, but they only serve as political hurdles to clearing the stimulus package.

Another provision would force Republicans to accede to longtime Democratic priorities on voting procedures. The so-called ACCESS Act, Division L of Pelosi's bill, requires states to have excuse-free early mail-in voting and same-day election registration. It also permits ballot harvesting, a procedure whereby third parties can collect absentee ballots for the voters and deliver them to the election authority. This procedure was involved in a notorious voter-fraud case in North Carolina recently whereby a vendor to Republican campaigns persuaded voters to give them unmarked ballots which they then marked for the Republican candidate. Extending this provision nationwide is an obvious nonstarter, and yet it still appears in her bill. This is not a way to inspire bipartisan trust at a time when the nation sorely needs it.

Other priorities puzzle me. For example,

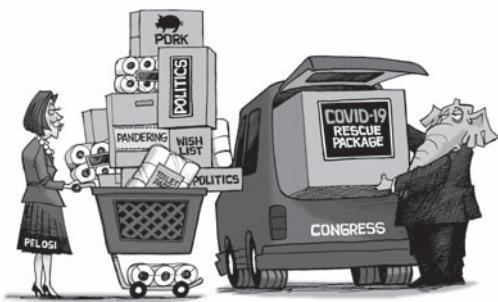
an additional \$20 billion is earmarked to reimburse the Postal Service for lost revenue. \$600 million is reserved for new grants by the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities — money that can be used by recipients for general operating revenue. \$300 million is set aside for new grants to public television and radio stations. Should contractors and employees of these entities be preferred above contractors and employees of private businesses?

The bill also prioritizes aid to foreign development banks. About \$11 billion is set aside to recapitalize or purchase additional shares in the International Development Association, the African Development Bank and Fund, and the North American Development Bank. Again, maybe worthy goals, but are they really a response to the U.S. coronavirus epidemic?

Then we get into some big-ticket items that reveal strong Democratic priorities. \$100 billion is reserved for grants and funding to public or nonprofit health care entities, as well as Medicaid or Medicare enrolled suppliers, that can be used to reimburse for lost revenue. More than \$1 billion is reserved to bail out Amtrak. \$30 billion is reserved for state and local education expenditures, and any grants given to states comes with a proviso that the state spend at least as much on K-12 and higher education as it spent on average over the three prior fiscal years. One can easily imagine how any one of these provisions would lead to serious negotiations with Senate Republicans. Include all of them, and surely others I haven't yet identified, and you have a recipe for prolonged negotiations.

Then there are the non-monetary provisions. Pages 162 and 163 of the Democrats' bill amend the United States' trade agreement with Mexico and Canada. Are these substantive changes or merely technical ones? Better question: Why include them in

LEAH COOKE 3-25-20 by Leah Cooke/PoliticalCartoonGroup



this bill at all? Pages 232 and 233 require the labor secretary to promulgate new nationwide standards on employers to prevent occupational exposure to pathogens. This can be a huge cost burden on employers depending on who occupies that position. Is it necessary right now? Finally, Pages 258 and 259 temporarily repeal the work requirements for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families recipients, a goal long sought by the Democratic left. If the goal is to avoid sanctioning welfare recipients during the crisis, a better approach would be to waive sanctions in regions with high unemployment rather than simply repealing the requirements altogether, even on a temporary basis.

This doesn't mean that the bill doesn't have worthwhile ideas or that the Senate Republican bill is perfect. Democrats are probably right to insist that any grants to large companies be subject to oversight or conditions set by Congress, to ensure that funds are used by those in need to help those in need. Increasing the amount of unemployment compensation available to employees is also a good idea. But none of that detracts from the fact that Democrats are using the crisis for messaging among the left.

The country needs unity right now. Both

sides need to give and withhold the temptation to use the crisis to leverage other objectives. The November election will determine how far the country wants to go down one of those competing paths. Let's use this time to deal with the emergency, and defer the partisan battle for later.

Henry Olsen is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

Klobuchar is the best fit to be Biden's running mate

By GEORGE SKELTON
Los Angeles Times

Joe Biden made a smart move by promising to choose a woman as his running mate. Next he needs to be smart again and choose the right woman.

Pledging to select a female vice president was smart because it's the right thing to do. America, supposedly the land of equal opportunity, should have elected a woman president long ago. The sleep spot is just one step away.

The right thing isn't always the smart thing politically. But in this case it was for the Democratic front-runner. Assuming Biden becomes the party's presidential nominee, the right female running mate should help the ticket appeal to swing-state suburban women in battleground states he must carry to oust President Donald Trump in November.

Moreover, by promising unequivocally to select a woman, the former vice president will avoid a heap of pressure to do just that leading up to the party's nominating convention in July. With the issue off the board, it won't distract him from his main message of anti-Trump, steady-handed, moderate pragmatism.

But it's vital for Biden that he select a running mate who isn't a campaign liability or distraction. He needs someone who will help the ticket attract voters, or at least not drive them away.

For more than a year, California Sen. Kamala Harris, 55, has been on the short

list of speculators' VP contenders. But selecting her might not be the smartest play.

Biden commented after Harris gave up her own presidential bid in December that he would consider the senator for "anything she was interested in," including the vice presidency. Selecting a woman of color could excite the Democratic base — something Biden, 77, doesn't do. He has all but clinched the nomination because Democrats consider him the most likely candidate to beat Trump, the quality they deem most important, polls show.

Harris, who is black, would be the first woman of color ever nominated for vice president by a major political party. A Biden-Harris ticket would reflect the growing diversity of Democratic voters.

Those are the upsides. They're outweighed by downsides.

For starters, Harris' selection by Biden would look too cynical, too blatantly political to many voters.

Moreover, a running mate should be able to deliver her home state for the ticket. Harris isn't needed for that. California's 55 electoral votes — roughly 20% of the total required to win the presidency — are in the bag for any Democrat.

Anyway, she didn't exhibit much lasting appeal as a presidential candidate, even among voters of color in her own state.

A November poll of likely voters by the Public Policy Institute of California found Harris was the first choice for only 9% of home state Latinos and 9% of other ethnicities, mostly black and Asian voters. Biden

was supported by 27% of Latinos and 20% of other nonwhite voters.

Biden doesn't need a running mate's help to win over black voters. They have been his strength.

Harris also didn't exactly compile a stellar record as state attorney general. She was risk-averse — for example, not taking positions on two ballot propositions to abolish capital punishment and one to speed up executions, despite her professed career-long opposition to the death penalty. The two abolition measures failed and the proposal to expedite executions passed.

Her risk-averse trait carried over onto the presidential campaign trail where she often stumbled, most notably in wavering awkwardly on universal health care. This was despite aggressive, prosecutorial rhetoric.

But if Biden did choose Harris and they were elected, it would significantly alter California's political landscape.

Harris would automatically become a potential president, stymieing Gov. Gavin Newsom's long-range White House ambitions. But in the short term, Newsom would reap a political bonanza. The governor would choose Harris' Senate successor.

Or Newsom could grab the Senate seat himself by resigning and being appointed by the new governor. It's doubtful he would do that.

If Newsom named a statewide official, he could also choose that person's replacement and control a game of musical chairs.

But we're getting way ahead of ourselves.

Biden has other women of color he could consider, including two Western Latinas: Nevada Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, 55, has a résumé similar to Harris' — she is a former state attorney general and first-term senator; New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, 60, is a former U.S. House member.

Stacey Abrams, 46, who is black, narrowly lost a 2018 race for Georgia governor and is frequently mentioned as a potential VP. Get serious. Maybe someday, but so far the highest office she has won is state legislator.

Some other women:

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, 48, is impressive. And she could deliver a vital state that Hillary Clinton lost to Trump four years ago.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, 70? Too far left. Not a good fit.

Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, 59, could have broad appeal in the Midwest and assure victory in her home state, which supported Clinton only narrowly in 2016. Her presidential race never gained traction, but she's smart, experienced, articulate, upbeat and her moderate ideology would be acceptable in battleground states. She's in sync with Biden politically.

Right now, Biden's smartest choice seems to be Klobuchar.

Political columnist George Skelton has covered government and politics for nearly 60 years and for the Los Angeles Times since 1974.



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NFL/SOCCER

NFL briefs

Goodell orders facilities closed

Associated Press

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell instructed the 32 teams to close their facilities to all but a select few employees by 6 p.m. Wednesday.

In a memo to the teams, Goodell said the restrictions meant as a safeguard against the new coronavirus will be in force until at least April 8, when the league will re-evaluate, using advice from medical experts and health authorities.

The NFL has gotten some pushback for not postponing the draft scheduled for April 23-25 while the rest of the sports world is largely shut down. Several teams have suggested there could be a competitive disadvantage in keeping those dates and have cited the inability to perform physical exams on draft prospects. But the draft remains on schedule and the league is developing a new format because it has scrapped the public events set for Las Vegas.

Goodell told the teams only the following employees can be at team facilities for the next two weeks:

- Trainers or doctors who are providing ongoing medical treatment to players.
- Directors of facilities, security personnel and independent contracts who maintain physical security of the facilities.
- Technology personnel necessary to maintain security and operational capabilities of a team's IT network that enables remote work by team staff.

Panthers release Newton

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The Cam Newton era is over in Carolina, as the Panthers released the 30-year-old quarterback after nine seasons.

The move became a mere formality after the Panthers made it clear last week they



ANTHONY BEHR, SIPA USA/TNS

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell instructed all 32 NFL teams to close their facilities to all but a select few employees by 6 p.m. Wednesday.

were moving on from Newton by giving him permission to seek a trade and then agreeing to a three-year, \$63 million contract with free-agent quarterback Teddy Bridgewater about 90 minutes later.

On Monday night, Newton posted on his Instagram account that he was "hungrier" now because he is "unemployed."

Given the inevitable outcome of a Newton-Panthers breakup, it was not surprising that no teams were willing to trade for Newton.

Newton now becomes a free agent and can sign with another NFL team immediately.

Jaguars sign Eifert for 2 years

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Oft-injured tight end Tyler Eifert and the Jacksonville Jaguars agreed to a two-year contract in free agency Tuesday night.

Eifert played in 16 games last year for the first time in his seven NFL seasons, all with Cincinnati. He caught 43 passes for 436 yards and three touchdowns.

He has 185 receptions for 2,152 yards and 24 touchdowns. His best year came in 2015, when he had 52 catches for 615 yards and 13 scores. But he's missed more games (34) than he's played (30) since.

Tip: Players can't get paid until new deals are registered

FROM BACK PAGE

doctors mutually agreed upon between franchises and players. Signed contracts must be registered with the league before anything becomes official and players can get paid on their new deals.

That led to dozens of leaks of deals without teams being able to confirm them when the NFL business year began last Wednesday.

Through all that, million-dollar pacts emerged everywhere — some of them still unannounced by teams.

Brady leaving New England has been the mind-blowing move, naturally. Suddenly, a franchise that hasn't seen the post-season in a dozen years has some cachet. And the most dominant team of the past two decades, with Brady leading the Patriots to six championships in nine Super Bowl trips, has lost its essence.

And the other relocations through free agency and trades will require some studying up by fans. The biggest moves so far, and with several big names still on the market, seem to be:

- All-Pro receiver DeAndre Hopkins dealt to Arizona by Houston.
- QBs Teddy Bridgewater to Carolina and Philip Rivers to Indianapolis as free agents.

■ Standout cornerback Darius Slay leaving Detroit for Philadelphia, which released star safety and leader Malcolm Jenkins, who returned to New Orleans.

■ WR Stefon Diggs dealt by the Vikings

to the Bills, who haven't had such an accomplished receiver in years.

■ Todd Gurley, merely the league's best running back from 2015-17 but now with knee issues, cut by the Rams and landing in Atlanta.

■ Calais Campbell, one of the best edge rushers around, dealt by Jacksonville to Baltimore.

The draft

With the huge extravaganza the draft has become scrapped, the NFL soon will announce its altered format.

Look for something resembling a studio TV show with much of the information (and misinformation) flow fans are accustomed to. There's even chatter about prospective picks being asked to allow camera crews in their homes for reactions to being selected.

By far the biggest effect of the pandemic on the draft is the elimination of pro days at various schools. While some see those as outtings manufactured and managed by the collegians and their representatives, many NFL teams find significant value in them.

As for Las Vegas, it will get another draft, perhaps the 2022 selections that are unspoken for right now. Next year will be in Cleveland, 2023 in Kansas City.

Offseason programs

Losing OTAs and minicamps in the

spring would seem minor — most everything about the machinations of sports right now can feel that way — but they are important to teams in several ways.

If a new coaching staff is in place, those get-togethers are when players begin grasping new playbooks and philosophies and strategies. Not to mention getting to know the coaches they'll be working under. And new teammates.

Team chemistry begins to build during those sessions. Progress can be gauged. So can dedication and perseverance.

Out-of-shape players will be the norm this summer, and getting them back into football fitness will present a real challenge.

The schedule

The schedule might not be in flux for the regular season set to begin on Sept. 10, probably in Kansas City. But the pre-season, from when training camps can open and what restrictions exist — caused by the new coronavirus or by the labor agreement that went into effect this month — to actually playing exhibition games could be in question.

We've already seen how shoddy September contests can be with so many regulars sitting out August games. What if the NFL needs to cancel pre-season games?

Then again, many fans might applaud that, eager for the real stuff, no matter how sloppy it might be early on.



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP

Cindy Parlow Cone, the newly installed U.S. Soccer Federation president, said in a news conference Tuesday that settling a lawsuit filed by women's national team players is the top priority for her and Will Wilson, the new chief executive officer.

US Soccer Federation resets goal

BY RONALD BLUM

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The newly installed president and chief executive officer of the U.S. Soccer Federation used their first news conference to state that settling a lawsuit filed by women's national team players is a top priority.

"A lot of damage has been done, and I think we are going to have to rebuild that trust and rebuild the relationship. It is not going to happen overnight," President Cindy Parlow Cone said Tuesday. "It's going to take a lot of effort and time and energy from the U.S. Soccer side to rebuild that trust, not only with our U.S. women's national team players, but with our fans and everyone engaged in the sport."

Players claim they have not been paid equally to the men's national team and asked for more than \$66 million in damages under the Equal Pay Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A trial is scheduled for May 5 in federal court in Los Angeles.

"The solution here is clear, simple, and unequivocal: equal pay," responded Molly Levinson, spokeswoman for the players.

In legal papers filed this month ahead of the trial, the USFF claimed the women's team didn't have the physical abilities or the same responsibilities as the men's team. That sparked a furor that included an on-field protest by players wearing their warm-up jerseys outside in to the USSF crest. The outcry led to the resignation of USFF President Carlos Cordeiro and caused the federation to change its lead law firm.

Chief legal officer Lydia Wahlke has been placed on administrative leave, which was first reported Tuesday by ESPN. Parlow Cone said an outside firm has been retained to review USFF decision-making that led to the briefs "to see where that process broke down." She hopes to schedule settlement talks.

A 41-year-old World Cup and Olympic champion, Parlow Cone had been the USFF vice president before Cordeiro quit on March 12.

"The comments and the language in the last filing," Parlow Cone said, "I think not only hurt our relationship with our women's national team, but hurt women and girls in general, and as a former national player, they were personally hurtful to me."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL/PRO SPORTS/NHL

Reverse play: NCAA permits charity effort



CHRIS CARLSON/AP

Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence and his girlfriend, Anderson soccer player Marissa Mowry, will be allowed to continue their [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) page to benefit coronavirus victims, the NCAA said.

Leagues, teams try new plans on the fly

By TOM CANAVAN

Associated Press

Major sports leagues and teams across the United States are being forced to write a new game plan on how to pay employees and keep the franchises solvent in the wake of a coronavirus pandemic that has all but stopped revenue and brought competition to a halt.

Major League Baseball, the NFL and NBA have not made employee cuts at this point. NASCAR announced major cuts across the board Tuesday. The NHL is cutting salaries for league employees 25%, starting next month.

Individual teams seemly are having a hard time making up their minds. The New Jersey Devils of the NHL and Philadelphia 76ers of the NBA — who have the same co-owners, flipped in the past two days.

Employees making more than \$100,000 had their salaries cut by 20% on Monday. The decision was



MICHAEL Dwyer/AP

Pedestrian traffic on March 14 in front of TD Garden, where the Boston Celtics and the Boston Bruins play. The Jacobs Family has established a \$1.5 million fund for the Bruins and TD Garden part-time game-day associates who will be financially burdened if the six remaining regular-season Bruins games are not played.

rescinded Tuesday.

PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan has suspended his salary indefinitely while golf tournaments are not being played.

"You are going to see people experiment, trying out different formulas with all that's going on," said Andrew Zimbalist, an economist at Smith College in Northampton, Mass. "There is not some major algorithm out there that tells you what to do in this circumstance. They have not faced it before."

Zimbalist said most leagues

and teams are attempting to keep people employed with a decent level of income. The problem is, things can change almost daily on political and financial fronts.

NASCAR made the biggest news Tuesday, ordering staff pay cuts across its entire company until the series returns to racing.

NASCAR President Steve Phelps sent a late-afternoon memo to employees saying all officers will have a 25% reduction in salary, while all other employees will have their salary reduced by 20%.

Clemson's Lawrence, girlfriend can resume webpage for virus victims

Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — It turns out Trevor Lawrence and his girlfriend didn't do anything wrong when they were trying to help coronavirus victims and their families.

What sounded like a noble effort but might have been an NCAA violation is OK after all.

The NCAA said Tuesday the couple can resume their fundraising efforts after Clemson officials had shut down their [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) page — "Covid-19 Family Relief and Support" — for fear the quarterback was committing a violation.

Lawrence and his girlfriend Marissa Mowry received the go-ahead from the governing body for the page after Clemson's compliance office had halted their efforts Monday afternoon — hours after they launched it.

The roller-coaster ride had left Lawrence — one of the leading Heisman Trophy candidates heading into next season — and Mowry, a soccer player at Anderson (South Carolina) University, apologizing for trying to do what they thought was right before the NCAA stepped in.

The NCAA said in a statement it did not ask Clemson to take down the [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) page. The

NCAA said it will continue working with its member schools to ensure athletes and those affected by the virus are supported.

"We applaud Trevor for his efforts," the NCAA statement said.

Clemson spokesman Ross Taylor said school compliance officials correctly applied NCAA guidelines against athletes using their names, images and likenesses for crowdfunding — but that was before the NCAA contacted the school.

"We applaud and appreciate their swift action in permitting this activity," Clemson's athletic department said in a statement.

The couple had raised \$2,670 before Clemson officials informed Lawrence the page violated NCAA rules.

Before the NCAA contacted Clemson, Mowry had posted a video on Instagram Tuesday explaining the situation, thanking those who donated and apologizing for any confusion.

"Our intentions were to try and help everyone," Mowry said. "That's changed a little bit, but we're still going to do our best to love on you all and support one another during this hard time."

Taylor said he did not know if Lawrence and Mowry would restart their fundraising page.

NHL extends isolation period for players, staff

BY STEPHEN WHYNO
AND JOHN RAWROW

Associated Press

The NHL is extending its recommendation for players and staff to self-isolate and stay away from team facilities during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Deputy commissioner Bill Daly on Tuesday confirmed the NHL has asked that players and staff extend their self-quarantine 10 days beyond the original March 27 timeline to April 6 — further pushing back the earliest team facilities can reopen.

The league over the past two days has held conference calls with its Board of Governors and general managers to inform them about and to take questions regarding the current situation. Daly told The Associated Press the calls provided updates.

There is still no clarity when the NHL might resume its season, though the Center for Disease Control's recommendation of no gatherings of 50 or more people until mid-May is expected to factor into the timing. The league and Players' Association told players they could self-isolate until the end of March.

DID YOU KNOW?

The NHL asked that players and staff extend their self-quarantine 10 days beyond the original March 27 timeline to April 6, pushing back when facilities can open.

SOURCE: Associated Press

Commissioner Gary Bettman said recently the decision to resume play would be made in accordance with health officials. The league is working on various scenarios about what a potential return to play could look like.

Bettman said he remains optimistic about resuming this season and awarding the Stanley Cup. That could mean playing games into the summer or early fall.

The NHL said it plans to stage a full 2020-21 season, even if it means starting as late as November.

Two Ottawa Senators players tested positive for COVID-19, and six others were tested with results pending. The league has said its medical experts do not recommend mass testing for players or staff unless they exhibit symptoms.

SPORTS



Shelved for the season
Mets' Syndergaard must undergo
Tommy John surgery » **MLB, Page 21**



KELVIN KUO, ABOVE, AND STEPHEN B. MORTON, RIGHT/AP

Above: The Minnesota Vikings traded wide receiver Stefon Diggs, right, and a 2021 seventh-round draft pick to the Buffalo Bills for the 22nd pick in this year's draft along with a fifth- and sixth-rounder this year and a fourth-rounder in 2021. **Right:** The Baltimore Ravens acquired 6-foot-8 defensive end Calais Campbell last week from the Jacksonville Jaguars for a fifth-round draft pick.

Inside: Commissioner Goodell orders all 32 NFL teams to close their facilities for two weeks, Page 22

TO OUR READERS

As the sports world pauses to join the rest of the world in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, you will see fewer sports stories in Stars and Stripes. We look forward to resuming our normal coverage when the leagues and governing bodies determine it is safe for athletes and fans to return to competition.



NFL

Upheaval

Brady to Bucs only tip of changing landscape

BY BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

Major changes are everywhere in the NFL. They won't likely end soon. A free agency frenzy that has seen steady player movement — yes, players beyond Tom Brady have changed addresses — has been the focal point. With little to nothing else going on in sports, the NFL has grabbed headlines with business deals between players and teams.

Those transactions have changed the league landscape. But so have many other moves involving the draft, offseason programs and perhaps the upcoming season itself as the new coronavirus pandemic affects every aspect of our lives.

Here's a look at all of those elements in America's most popular and lucrative sport.

Free agency

Awkwardness might be the keyword. The NFL barred play-



TONY AVELAR/AP
The Los Angeles Rams released running back Todd Gurley, who promptly signed a one-year deal with the Atlanta Falcons.

ers from visiting teams courting them and banned club personnel from traveling to meet with the free agents — both wise and necessary moves.

Physicals on which contract agreements are reliant could only be performed locally or by

SEE TIP ON PAGE 22

